

Hades' Fury
菱影代理

イラスト 森野ヒロ

黒の魔王

IV

赤き憤怒の咆哮

FREEDOM
NOUVEL

Kuro no Maou

- The Black Demon King -

- Volume 4 -

Omen of Destruction

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CHAPTER 45

PROLOGUE OF THE MOONLIT NIGHT

15th of the month of spring water (Shimizu). Once again I gaze at the full moon in the sky all alone.

I had been alone till now, and I will stay alone forever.

That's fine. If I can stay as a child, I won't feel pain, I won't feel bitter, I won't feel lonely, nobody would resent me, I'll forget everything and live on.

But, that was the last time I saw the full moon alone.

I will never forget, on the 4th of the month of early-summer breeze (Ryokufuu), I had a fateful encounter.

"My name is Kurono Maou, you are?"

I won't be alone ever again.

If I stayed like a child it won't be painful? It won't hurt? It won't be lonely? It won't be sad?

It was all a lie.

It was simply just a deception, fooling myself, deceiving myself, acting like I didn't notice.....

But, all that doesn't matter anymore.

The past doesn't matter anymore. Everything doesn't matter anymore.

Because—

"Aah, as long as I have Lily, I can keep living in this world, I won't be lonely."

The same feelings as myself.

You, as long as you are by my side, I can keep on living, I won't be lonely.

I won't return to the past again, I won't return to being lonely again, because you are with me.

Yes, that's why, all the world needs is just you and me.

Everything else is, now, not needed.

CHAPTER 46

THE SECRET OF THE APPLE BOX

I always had a doubt from the time I started living in Irz Village as an adventurer.

That doubt goes back to the day I met Lily for the first time.

Thanks to Lily throwing water on my face, I woke up and found myself in the middle of the forest. After that is all as we know it but, what's important is the part before this. Just how did I end up in Fairy Garden?

I had smuggled myself inside a box filled with apples (actually a similar fruit) at the port town of the Arc continent. The box that I had sneaked in was, along with the other goods, crammed into the ship's hatch and left on a 1 week long voyage.

Inside the cramped box, all I could do was sleep, eat the fruits and develop my black magic.

During this development time, I came up with [load] and [shadow space] like convenient magics.

But, inside the swaying ship, closed inside a small box, unable to move even a bit, was not going to be a comfortable trip.

The only reason I was fine was of course, thanks to the super body gained with the modifications that allowed me to easily live for 1 month without eating or drinking.

I wasn't hungry much and had too much free time, and the just fact that I was not in that facility anymore, made it feel like a much better environment.

And the last thing I remember inside the apple box was about 7 days after departure.

Becoming sleepy, I immersed my own body inside the already perfected shadow space except the face. The shadow space contains magic but no air so I had to keep at least my face outside to avoid suffocating.

If someone looked from the side they'll see only the eerie sight of a single face floating, but to sleep while spreading my legs inside that small box, it was the easiest method.

In fact, it felt neither cold nor hot, and did not even feel the swaying of the ship either so it was really comfortable. Moreover, if I submerged my ears as well then it also became sound proof since sound did not pass through it.

Thinking back now, disconnecting almost my whole body from the outside through the use of Shadow space might be the biggest reason I had no idea whatever happened to me after that.

And before I realized it I was inside the forest.

Yes, the doubt I had was to know just what happened that led to me ending up there.

At first I thought that it went something like this- The ship reached the port normally, goods unloaded, transport by land route, and in the middle, fallen from a cliff and inside the forest.

But that ship belonged to Arc continent, no, to be precise, it belonged to the Syncorea Republic, a country of humans.

The destination of the ship should have been the base built for invasion of the Pandora Continent, i.e. Virginia.

But, Virginia was being pushed back by the Daidalos army. So just how did a human bring the box this inland.

That box should have been a part of the resupply goods meant for Virginia. It should have been consumed in Virginia and should have no reason to go any further.

In the first place, even if someone could carry it till here, humans were not even allowed to get of Virginia currently.

A contradiction originated here. A box meant to be in Virginia was currently in Fairy Garden, far east of Virginia.

The owner of the box, i.e. humans, cannot have carried it till here, then, who was the one that carried it till here?

It might seem like question that could make someone lose his sleep from anxiety, but the answer, the identity of the being that carried it cleared it easily.

“A garuda, was it the one behind it?”

On one of the hills making up the Gallahad mountain range, at its summit existed a garuda nest.

I am currently, to complete a special quest, in the middle of infiltrating this nest along with Lily.

If at the top most point, a suspiciously big cave exists, then it would be a garuda’s nest. Was that cave naturally made or was it dug by the garuda, I didn’t know. But it was definitely an amazing cave with a height of around 10m.

Inside that giant cave, within the stash of shining items and prey collected by the Garuda like a crow, I had found a thing similar to the apple box I had snuck in.

Within my range, I can see two apple boxes. In the surroundings there are also broken similar boxes as well.

Looking at all these things, I thought and inferred.

A Garuda that can fly long distances with ease, discovered a ship of the Republic on the sea.

Whether it was simply on a whim or it had planned all along, Garuda attacked the transport ship and took large amounts of apple boxes with it.

And among those boxes was the one I was in.

To think that I didn’t realise anything even when this monster bird attacked the whole ship. The isolation abilities of shadow space are really fearsome.

I flew along with the Garuda in skies of Pandora while in deep sleep.

And, by chance, the box I was in fell and landed in Fairy Garden, the place I met Lily.

“aah, I feel a bit refreshed now—“

Oops! Now's not the time to be relieved by solving my doubts.

We came here for a specific reason. Work, I need to work.

"Lily, go search there, I'll search that way."

"Ye~s"

I and Lily were adventurers as a pair.

At first, we did only the quest of collecting medicinal herbs together, and actually Lily thought that we could make do with just the money received from the sales. But, now she accompanied me in every quest and we were now making a living out of adventurer work.

Although I didn't want to make Lily take part in the dangerous adventurer life style, that full moon night, the girl-form Lily wanted to become an adventurer along with me and didn't listen to me at all, so now we worked as a pair.

Talking with her all night, that was not the only thing we decided upon. The other important decision was —

"Kurono~found it~"

"ooh, nice Lily!"

Decorated with various shining jewels, Lily held up one shining sword.

But that treasured sword was also overshadowed in front of the fully dressed up fairy Lily.

Yes, the other important decision was to make Lily wear clothes.

It was not because of me that she stayed always naked, it was normal for a fairy after all, but the girl Lily needed them so it became like this.

The black one piece that covered her body was a great match with her radiant white skin.

No, well, I think Lily would look cute in t-shirt and jeans as well though.

By the way, for adventurers, clothes were meant as an important type protection for the body. But, Lily's current clothes were simply meant to be cute.

In the first place, Lily whose default appearance was being fully nude, possessed an extremely strong defensive shield type Extra magic called [fairy barrier – Oracle Shield]. So unless it was something truly amazing, armour would become a hindrance to her instead.

By the way, the sphere of light that covered the original fairies during the time I met Lily was Oracle Shield.

But, even for a beginner adventurer, armour or protective armaments were something they needed to be particular about.

So, I searched for a suitable item for Lily to wear.

And the thing that caught my eye was a fabric called [Ancient Velvet] being sold by a certain merchant. The touch and polish, both were splendid and on top of it, it was infused with a strong defensive magic as well. It was really a high-class magic item.

Speaking of its cost, it was much higher than all my savings I had diligently accumulated till now.

Well, it's obvious that it was out of reach for a newbie adventurer like me.

Normally, it was enough to make me give up, but this merchant had some certain circumstances.

"The treasured sword passed down from generation to generation in our family was stolen away by a garuda!"

That's what it was.

The request for recovery was filed in the guild but nobody seemed to accept it. Even private contractors, would not go face a monster that had been classed at rank 4.

He wanted to recover it as fast as possible but there was nothing he could do.

Although I felt bad for the unfortunate merchant, this was a chance for me. If I could complete the request, I could receive the high class good Ancient Velvet as reward.

As a result I accepted the request on the condition that there will be no advance payment, no payment for losses, and the reward will be given only when the request is completed.

Although he didn't really believe a rank 1 adventurer like me, but from his point of view he was at zero disadvantage since there was no advance nor need to cover for losses. So he had no reason to refuse me either.

Thus, I took one my very first private request not affiliated with the guild.

"Anyway, with this, the request is complete."

Well, we were attacked along the way here by monsters but thanks to Lily finding it quickly, we were able to finish it without having to face the garuda.

Uptill now, with the exception of Sariel, the strongest opponent I had faced during the experiments was a [Firedrake – Salamander].

I got my whole body burned as well as had my left arm and stomach torn and eaten but I was somehow able to defeat it in the end. It was a rank 4 monster as well.

Compared to then, my control over black magic has gotten much better, and now I also have good equipment, so if I faced it now, although I might take serious injuries, I should be able to defeat it without dying.

Therefore, a garuda of the same rank 4, even if I ended up fighting it, even in the worst case I should be able to defeat it by relying on Lily's support.

But that's only something I could do. Since, the request does not require me to kill the garuda I'll avoid confrontation no matter what.

Above all else, I don't want Lily to get injured.

"Now then, before the master of this place returns—"

We should return. The moment I was about to say that, a shrill cry resounded.

Outside the cave, in the sky spreading beyond it, a small black spot appeared.

As that black spot came closer this way, it clearly became a bird like silhouette. The whole body was black, with ornamental feathers sticking on its head and tail, it had a figure that reminded of an eagle.

But, it was too big for a normal eagle.

“oh shit.....”

Of course, that giant shadow was the monster bird garuda.

And this was the garuda’s nest. It even had eggs bigger than Lily here.

From the garuda’s point of view, we were nothing more than egg stealers.

“KYOEEEEEEE!!!”

While releasing terrific anger, the Garuda approached us at ultra high speed.

Shit! Even though I thought we finished it without any problems.

“Run!”

“Un!”

I threw the objective treasured sword inside the shadow space; At least I won’t lose it or drop it now.

Before the garuda can reach here, I grabbed Lily and threw myself directly in the air from the cave.

“I’m counting on you Lily!”

I joined hands with Lily, and I dangled in mid air.

“eeeeei!!”

Lily released her usual cute shout and at the same time my body felt like it was floating a bit.

“nn～～!”

Lily's shining wings spread out even more than usual.

She is able to fly even while holding me. Lily's wings aren't just for show after all. Aah I can experience flying like this at least once.

But, Lily who was not a full fairy, doesn't have the ability to fly all day long, neither can she fly at high speeds.

"Lily, hang on for just a little bit more!"

"un!"

It was an incomplete flying ability, yet Lily persistently kept flying while holding me.

No, rather flying, it should be called gently falling, but still I can understand her brave efforts.

The lush green forest below, little by little came closer.

The cave where the garuda's nest was, had now become far above us, as we had fallen quite a lot of distance.

At this height, I should be fine probably—

"Thanks Lily, it's fine now."

"Kurono—"

I released Lily's hands and started to free fall.

Lily looked at the falling me with a worried face but I was instead worried about her.

In the worst case, even if both my arms broke from the fall, if it's this body, it'll fix up somehow.

"But, maybe it was bit too high....."

In the middle of the few seconds, I felt a bit of regret, and I crashed into the green trees.

“Ouch—“

While breaking branches one after the other, I fell towards the ground.

I thought that the fall would be broken a bit by the trees, but is there even any effect?

In a matter of seconds, a lot useless thoughts go through my head, and I finally crashed to the ground.

“Guh!!”

Somehow fixing my posture, I land with my feet. The shock ran through my body to my head.

“ma, made it somehow.....”

My feet sank into the ground a bit though. But that's it. I can't feel any abnormality in my feet. I once again thanked my over sturdy body and sprawled down on the ground

“Kurono～”

From the skies an angel, no, Lily's voice came to me.

With her wings shining, she leaped onto my chest.

“Are you okay?”

“I'm fine. No problem. Is the Garuda coming after us?”

“No, it isn't.”

Thank god. Since we didn't lay our hands on the eggs, I figured it won't chase us if ran away quickly. As expected, it let us go.

“Alright, since the request has been completed, let's return quickly.”

“Yes!”

While holding Lily in my arms, I quickly got up, and left the foot of Gallahad mountain range.

The sky resounded with the garuda's cry, a howl of a windwolf could be heard far away, and maybe a dortoth is rampaging again somewhere, since the ground is shaking a bit.

Having become used to such an environment, the 5th month quickly passed away as I settled in my life as an adventurer. The 6th month started and summer had come.

Today on the 4th day of the month of new sun (Shinyou), exactly 2 months after I had met Lily.

CHAPTER 47

START OF SUMMER

In the eastern region of the Pandora continent, including Irz Village, a festival known as the [Festival of Natsugoshi (lit. beyond summer/keeping summer)] on the 30th of the month of new sun (Shinyou).

The word 'Natsugoshi' might seem like an unfamiliar word, but every Japanese should have heard of 'End of the year/New year's eve'.

'End of the year' is a time for doing major cleanups, meant to wash away the impurities and welcome the New Year.

This 'Natsugoshi' was also similar to that. In the same meaning, the villagers start doing major cleanups and then welcome the summer.

Originally, it was meant to maintain hygienic conditions and surroundings by doing major cleanups during the start of summer and end of year.

Although medicines and pharmaceutics had also developed in this world along with restoration and healing magic, but they are still not on the same level as modern Japan in terms of medical facilities. So it was extremely necessary to improve the hygienic conditions through events and also prevent any outbreak of diseases or epidemics.

Though it possessed such an important and serious objective, in the end, a festival was a festival. Whether it was this world or my original world, it was normal for people to get excited during festivals.

Finishing the cleanup by the 30th, on that day a festival is held with all the effort of the villagers.

This was what I heard from Nyarko inside the guild's lobby as I ate my lunch.

"I can't stay silent if we're talking about festivals!" (Kurono)

"I have also enjoyed them every year." (Nyarko)

My first festival event in the different world! I am of course excited but it seems Nyarko is excited as well.

In this different world where there are few sources of enjoyment and pleasure, a festival would definitely be one important and large event.

“Lily-san also comes every year. She treats people who get injured.”

“Is that so? That’s unexpectedly mature of her.....”

Just like her age, no wait, just like her outer appearance suggests, I thought she would go around frolicking in high spirits, but to think she would be a part of the management staff.

That mature Lily was currently in a corner of the lobby playing around with a round fat cat.

If you play around too much then your valuable Ancient Velvet one piece dress would get covered with fur you know?

“This year Kurono-san is also there, so this year Lily-san can also be carefree and go around enjoying the stalls.”

“Yeah, the two of us can—oh, are you saying that there will be stalls too?”

“What are you saying Kurono-san? If you talk about a festival, then the first thing you think about is the numerous food stalls, isn’t it? Ah, could it be that it wasn’t like that in Kurono-san’s hometown?”

“No, we had them in my hometown as well. Guess they would be selling eatables that can be easily consume while walking right?”

“Yes, there are a lot of shops selling skewered grilled meat, and sake~. During festivals, people loosen their strings on their purses it seems, so it’s easier to make more money. Even though I know this, I still end up buying lots of things after all~ especially on that mysterious lottery done near the item shop.”

“Ah, old man Kische seems like he would do a lot of things.....”

“But, it really is fun to walk around the various stalls even if the feet get sore~. This year I am lifting my ban on high spending!”

“It really was fun to buy as much as you could from the little pocket money I was given as a kid...”

Well, in my original world, I would have still been officially a child though.

I went to the literature club, and didn't have any part time jobs either. But to think that my first ever manual labour would be as an adventurer in a different world, really, no one can tell what life has in store for you.

“When I was a child I dreamt of conquering over all the types of sweets being sold in the stalls, but this year I'll make sure to actually realise that dream~fufu~.”(Nyarko)

“It might not feel that amazing when you actually do it, you know?”(kurono)

“Oh come on~Don't say such realistic things now~”

Today also, I kept on chatting idly with Nyarko. This will probably continue until Pine-san comes, I guess.

Although Nyarko doesn't stop no matter what, but I guess I'm also the same since I never stop her either. Maybe what Nino said about me interfering in her job might be actually true.

“But still, doesn't it feel like summer has already started before the festival? It's become much hotter in the past few days.”(Kurono)

Probably, Irz village is on a lower latitude than Japan. I can already expect that the days would be extremely hot for a long time later on.

Will I be fine wearing my favourite [Demon's embrace] under that scorching sun?

“Yes that is so..makes you want to drink something cold, right?”(nyarko)

In this world ruled by magic, ice isn't something high priced.

Even a rank 1 magician can create a lot of ice. If I used Aten's Ice Armour Shield, just how much shaved ice could be made out of that?

“Yeah, I really want to eat shaved ice, also ice creams—“(kurono)

As I remembered about such captivating ice items,

“What’s shaved ice or ice cream?”(nyarko)

“Eh, you don’t know?”

“Never heard of it. Is it a food from Kurono-san’s hometown?”

The Irz village had all sorts of eatables except junk food, so I thought they would have had ice cream. But, I see, in this world, at least near this village, Ice cream hasn’t been created yet.

“Yeah, it’s a pretty much staple item to be eaten during summers. But, alright, if you don’t have ice cream, then no choice but to create some!”(kurono)

“Ooh, a local dish from Kurono-san’s hometown!? This should be exciting!”

Well, I wonder if it’s fine to call shaved ice or ice cream a local dish.....

“Alright, tomorrow also looks like it’ll be hot as well, so I won’t take any quests today and try making some.”

CHAPTER 48

POPSICLE

I who was thinking of making ice-cream, in particular popsicles, began collecting materials at once.

“Welcome, did you finally run out of potions Kurono?”

“Regrettably I’ve only used one so far.”

I’ve come to the adventurer’s purveyor, the Irz village item shop.

Now that I have become a regular customer over here, we don’t talk to each other using honorifics.

“I’m looking for wooden sticks.”

The thing I’m searching here is definitely not the raw materials for ice-cream but the flat stick which will become the handle of the popsicle.

“A wooden stick, then how about this white wooden stake? When stabbed into their heart, the vampire race who takes pride in their immortality will be killed with a single blow.”

“I’m sorry I didn’t make my request clear, I’m not here to buy a weapon today.”

Putting aside the foolish imaginations of a delicious frozen treat that can also be used to murder vampires, I explain the circumstances and what I’m looking for.

“Well the most suitable thing I have is grilled chicken skewers.” [TN: yakitori]

“That will do.”

In addition, I purchase a container to act as a mold when I solidify the ice. After promising to give him the popsicle if it turns out good, I leave the item shop.

After purchasing the ingredients which will become the raw materials for popsicle, I leave the Irz village and return back home.

After returning home I start making popsicles with Lily, or rather, without Lily making popsicles would not be possible.

“Now that it has come to this, let’s make popsicles.”

“Popsicle?”

Lily blanky tilts her heads in confusion, it’s a normal reaction as she doesn’t know the existence of ice-cream.

“It is a dessert from my hometown which is cold, sweet, and delicious... at least when it is made successfully.”

I haven’t made popsicles since childhood.

But this time the materials and ingredients I have are different from modern Japan. If I fail then in the worst case I’ll end up with juice.

I’m a little anxious while I start making it but there is not a lot of work.

I smash an orange and grapes (which are genuinely like those on Earth unlike the false apple) which I bought to remove the juice. To each I add sugar and water to make an undiluted solution (it can almost be said to be juice).

I’m lucky that white sugar is circulating in this another world due to luck. Looking from the history, the making of sweets started when modern era started, after all the sweet items are luxury items.

However, here spices and salt are also available, so getting sugar was relatively easy. It seems like there will be no problems in making other sweets too.

In any case, I pour the undiluted solutions into the metal molds and add the skewer sticks to let it cool down.

As for the most important task, I ask Lily.

“Okay Lily, please freeze this with a little bit of ice magic.”

“Yes!”

Without knowing how it will help, Lily uses her freezing magic.

For this thing, my black magic is totally useless.

My black color magic consists of materialization of substances, adding enchantments, and making dimensional spaces for now. I cannot use the common color magic elements like Ice or Fire, or rather, there is no color magic inside my body, so it is impossible for me to learn it.

Therefore, I asked Lily who can use color magic to some extent other than her inherent magic Extra.

Similar to when Lily boils tea, a chill gushes out in the same way she breathes fire.

“Fuuu! Fuuu!”

The effect of the magic is powerful, in an instant the juice solution is frozen solid from Lily's hard work.

To eat the ice candies right from the shell, just freezing it slowly won't work. The freezing ingredient (a three to one ratio by weight of ice to salt) is used to freeze it in a few minutes.

But I can instantly freeze things without such a thing if I use magic.

“That's enough now Lily.”

“Hmm?”

I stop Lily's ice magic and reach out a hand to one of the containers.

While taking into consideration, if pulling it forcibly, it would uproot the skewer, I form a blade near the sides of the container using the black magic.

In front of the blade sticking out of the wall of rock of the container, the hardness of popsicle is as same as non-existent. I lightly open up the lid of the container.

And then, I smoothly pull the popsicle out of it.

“How is it?”

While receiving the gaze of curious Lily, I face the popsicle with seriousness that I've never shown.

As expected, there are no flavouring or coloring agents in it like the goods in the market, there is not much color in the popsicle and of course there is no scent.

But the taste should not be bad, while believing in that I put the popsicle inside my mouth.

The taste of the orange's sourness and the sugar's sweetness spreads inside the mouth along with the feeling of ice cubes crunching.

Yeah, this is without a doubt an orange flavoured popsicle!

“Yay, I made it just fine! Here, Lily you also eat it.”

I take out the popsicle using the same trick as before, and hand it to Lily.

She takes the popsicle while full of anticipation, and without hesitation bites into it.

“Chomp Chomp—!”

“How is it, is it tasty?”

“Tasty!?”

Seeing Lily eating it like crazy, I can get the idea of how tasty it is.

Even in another world, the kids love popsicles, as expected.

“Well, will you also eat the grape flavoured one?”

“Yeah!”

In this way, I remember about the nostalgic feeling of Japan, Lily also ate the frozen dessert while being happy, and so I completed the making of popsicles.

The next day, I came to guild for a midday meal today like yesterday.

“Oh, Nyarko-san, I made the ice-cream I mentioned yesterday, will you taste it?”

I hand over my best made popsicle to Nyarko, who came to me as always.

Besides me is Lily who has become a prisoner of the popsicle and is eating a grape flavoured one with relish.

“You really made it! Is it the one that Lily-san is eating?”

Seeing Lily who is eating it with relish, Nyarko’s eyes shine with anticipation.

“Yeah, it’s a popsicle made by freezing fruit juice—let’s skip over the tedious talks, try eating it. Ah, orange or grape, which one would you like?”

Then with orange, Nyarko answers. I take out the container stored inside the shadow space and hand over the popsicle to her.

With the same movements as Lily from yesterday, Nyarko bites into the popsicle.

“Chomp! Chomp!?”

“How is it?”

“Thi, this is—”

Nyarko eyes open wide in surprise, it seems like an lighting effect could appear behind her.

“What is this—! *Licking*”

Nyarko licks it wholeheartedly, as if licking a soft cream, and it is finished off very fast in front of my eyes.

Now that I think about it, the cat’s tongue is rough as it is made for ripping off the meat sticking to bones and Nyarko who is a cat beastman might also have it, but still, will the popsicle be shaved off just by licking it?

While thinking about these trivial thoughts, the popsicle disappears.

“So was it good?”

“Can I get the grape flavoured one too?”

I hand over the grape flavoured popsicle without speaking a word to Nyarko who has the eyes of a predator looking at its prey.

“Thank you very much— *Licking*”

But well, from the looks of it it looks I don’t even need to ask about its taste.

“This popsicle thing is really great! It’s my first time eating such a tasty thing!”

“That’s right, it tastes even better when eaten on hot days.”

“That might be right! This is a great invention Kurono-san!”

“Though it’s not me who created it.”

“No, no. this is an item which can bring a revolution in the food industry of Irz village. If put for sale, this will be really popular, no objections asked!”

“Oh, Is that so, it will be a hot summer after all—”

Somehow, it feels like it’ll be more peaceful if I sell popsicle with Lilly, rather than doing dangerous adventurer work.

No, I must at all costs find a device, altar, or magic circle inside a dungeon to go back to my own world.

It’s not the time to think about selling ice cream all the time.

“It is easy to make it, if I told it someone they might start selling it.”

Naturally, I’m not so good of a person to tell it for free. Though it is not a franchise, but let’s try selling it out to merchant guild at price equivalent to it.

“Ah, Kurono-san you have a bad face right now.”

“Hahahahaha, If I make a profit, I will let you eat as many popsicles as you want.”

“Really! It is a promise then!”

“Yeah, but if you eat too much it’ll ruin your stomach, so keep it in control.”

For proving that popsicle is an innovative sweet, I thought to let other people try it as samples.

At the right moment the members of Irz-Blader came inside the guild. First of all, let's make you guys the prisoners of popsicle.

"Oi Kurono! You gave something to Nyarko just now, right! Trying to win her through presents huh, you bastard!"

Before I can call out to them, as usual the personal knight of Nyarko, Nino comes rushing forward. [TN: Real translation would not sound cool. So i modified it a little. Though the meaning is not changed at all.]

"Calm down, I will also give it to you."

"That's not the problem here! In the first place, you after all are eating midday meals here with Nyarko everyday, what do you want!"

"Even if you ask me what I want... Anyways, how about you invite her for midday meals and dinner if you don't like it?"

"Du, du, dumbass, I can't do something so darin—"

I don't understand whether Nino is just pure or just incompetent. If you like her that much keep on attacking/approaching her.

Well, I can't say something so grand, as I have no experience in approaching any girl I like.

"An, and if i get refused....., I might never be able to cope up with it....."

This guy's lost it, Incompetent alert!

"So what is it you will give us Kurono?"

Ignoring the already dead leader, Aten steps forward to me.

"Aa, I made a sweet from my hometown called a popsicle, so I thought of letting everybody eat it."

“Popsicle? Never heard of it, but making sweets, Kurono you surprisingly have a girly hobby.”

“When it’s hot everyone yearns for it, well you’ll understand it once you eat it.”

“Ho~, pretty confident aren’t you?”

“Lily, Village Head, Nyarko, all three praised it saying it’s tasty.”

I presented it to Village Head before coming to the guild, when I went for my daily routine of reading there.

“For the time being, try to eat it, the flavors are—”

I distributed the popsicles of the flavour the guys wanted.

Everyone eats it together, the impressions are, well the same as till now—

“”Tasty!!””

And then, Aten also asks for the other popsicle flavor like Nyarko.

Even in the real world, It is this time of day one yearns for eating an ice cream.

CHAPTER 49

THE HUNGRY WITCH

That day, after distributing popsicles to many villagers, I made my way back to home. Of course, I didn't take any quests like yesterday.

Well it's not like I have to do quests everyday for my livelihood, one way or another it will be okay.

I give Lily a piggyback. While thinking how to sell the popsicle recipe to the merchant guild, I advance on the highway.

I've also gotten way more familiar with this highway having a dark background during the time the sun sets.

Normally, peddlers pass by this highway sometimes, but today I discovered a person that I have never seen.

That person was lying on her back without moving a twitch.....It was a witch.

“No matter how I look at her.....she's a witch right?”

She has a three-cornered hat covering her face, which I've only seen in picture books.

She is wearing a similar jet black robe like me, but near the bottom of her neck it is decorated with feathers. I can tell that it is an superior-class quality item.

Her weapon the long cane staff is leaning on her.

The more I look at her, the more of a perfect witch vibe she gives. It feels like I've just slipped into a fairy-tale world.

Well, this is a different world, so it might not be a peculiar thing here, but more importantly,

“.....What should I do in this situation?”

“?”

I don't know how to deal with such a delicate situation, Lily also looks puzzled.

It seems like she's asleep, but this is not the place to take an afternoon nap (It's already evening though!).

However, if it's an sudden illness only I can save her right now. There is almost never a person crossing the bridge at night.

Even so, she doesn't look like a person sick from illness.

Let's assess the situation, maybe a witch sleeping at evening on the highway might be natural in this other world, right? It's just that I don't know about it, right?

No matter how much I rack my brain, I can't think of a single reason why this witch is sleeping on the highway.

Should I call out to her? Or shall I ignore her?

After various simulations, the moment I thought of calling out to the witch,

“—That person over there, you're carrying something tasty, aren't you?”

The witch suddenly speaks out, and what's more, very rude words for someone she's meeting for first time.

“So, you were awake after all?”

At the Witch's abrupt statement, the beaten down me reflexively forget my polite speech and speak in the normal tone.

“Right now I'm very hungry, I want to eat something tasty.”

The witch takes off the three cornered hat that was her on her face and sluggishly puts in on her head.

And her hidden face is revealed.

Her expression is terribly sleepy with eyes half-opened, but still it's so cute that one could take her for a noble person just by judging her face.

Her skin is white, has bluish short hair, and golden eyes, though the colouring pattern is different she is definitely human.

The magical power sometimes affects the appearance of the user. The colors that are impossible to be found in my previous world are not particularly unusual in this world.

Now that I think about it, she said “I want to eat something tasty” in a clear tone, so she’s not sleepy, contradictory to her appearance.

“Ah I want to eat delicious things. Ah, I wanna eat~”

“I got it, I will give you something to eat, so listen to me.”

“Really? Thank you.”

There is not much change in her expression. But I did notice a slight happy expression swelling up from her.

My sister was a thoroughly expressionless person. Thus I have developed a skill to read through an expressionless person and I’m quite confident about it.

There are those expressionless types which have a wealth of hidden feelings and there are those like my sister who is the type whose feelings are all neutral.

Looks like she is the former type, I instinctively thought.

“Ah, sweet things if possible please.”

“.....Got it.”

In addition, looks like she a person who goes at her own pace.

‘I got stuck with a pain in the ass type of person’ while thinking that, I take out popsicle from the shadow.

“aiskyandi!” (Lily) [TN: Lily speaks in hiragana, so it’s not really the word for popsicle.]

“You’ve already ate three of them, now wait till tomorrow.”

It's not good to pamper Lily too much, thus I forged my heart into stone and decided to give her just three popsicles per day at most.

That's why I will not give it to you even if you make a face like you're dying for it.

"What is this?"

"It called a popsicle, it's made from freezing fruit juice."

"It's my first time seeing it, thanks for the unusual thing."

The witch's eyesight is already pinned on the popsicle, though her face is expressionless her eyes are like of a predator looking at its prey. [ET: Nyarko's disciple?]

I shake my hand right and left, and the witch's face chases after it while swinging her head.

".....Meanie?"

"Sorry, unintentionally."

She was looking at popsicle so seriously that I unintentionally played with her.

While trying really hard not to laugh, I hand over the popsicle to the witch.

"Chomp Chomp—!?"

"Is it tasty?"

--It's ridiculously tasty."

The popsicle vanishes almost instantly in her mouth. Even among the villagers who ate it today she the fastest of them all.

"You had a sweet and delicious thing after all, just like I thought."

"What is that, witch's intuition?"

From the popsicle container that is inside the shadow space, no smell should leak out, and of course no one should be able to see it.

"I can somehow know that you're hiding tasty something even if it's in the shadow space."

".....Really?"

"I just know, but it's only that much."

Do witches just somehow know that sort of thing? I always thought the concealment nature of the shadow was perfect, or is there a skill present in this world to see through such things.

By chance, is she a great witch? Or is she just a roadside glutton with tremendous talent?

I have many things to ask about, but first of all,

"Why are you sleeping in this place?"

Unless I ask this, the talk won't go anywhere.

"Because I was hungry."

"Did you collapse?"

"Something like that."

Despite in the situation where her life is in danger slightly, she still nonchalantly answers.

"Then you should eat something that fills up your stomach, not just a popsicle."

"I don't like anything other than sweet things."

"This is not the time to be picky, walk a little and buy something in the Irz village up front. Do you even have money?"

"I have gold —— see here."

Saying that, she puts her hand inside the hat and takes out a large-sized golden coin.

On one side is a portrait on a woman and on the other side is a never before seen magic circle drawn near the border of coin.

It might have been used for a long time as currency. The sides are chipped off a little.

But even those places which are chipped off are showing the luster of gold, looks like it's not plated with gold but rather made from gold itself.

I can't tell it's exact value without weighing it, but it easily surpasses the value of a normal 1 gold coin.

Ah wait, it's already surprising about the big gold coin but she took it out of her hat, most likely she's using a similar sort of magic as my shadow magic.

If she learnt it through the proper way unlike me, then among adventurers her rank even in the lowest would be 3.

She doesn't seem like the person she appears to be.

"If you have such a good gold coin, you can buy anything."

"Is that so? Then with this gold coin, let me buy those popsicles from just now."

"Too bad, the previous one was the last. and hey! Didn't I say to go and buy something that will fill your stomach?"

"I only like sweet things."

I heard it before!

Hey is this lass normally this unenergetic?

"Can you walk to Irz Village? It will take 1 hour at most to reach there from here."

"If it's that much then It's okay."

"I see, well it looks like you're a traveller witch too."

There are many travellers in this world like adventurers, merchants and troubadours.

"It's okay now that you have given me something delicious. Are you also a traveller?"

"No, I am— ah, I have not yet told you my name, I am Kurono, and this is—"

"I'm Lily."

"Are you both adventurers?"

In order to easily tell her, I show her my guild card.

"What is this?"

"It is a guild card, do you not know?"

"I saw the guild card from here for the first time"

'From here' you say, is she from a different country?

No wait, if I remember correctly this guild card is common through the whole Pandora continent.

In that case, she might have come from the western great desert or maybe from a very remote region.

"Isn't it better to register as an adventurer if you're confident in your magic? When your travelling funds run out you can earn them soon enough through it."

However, if she has a lot of those big gold coins it's a story of years from now for them to be exhausted.

"I am also thinking of becoming an adventurer soon. I thought to register when I reach the city of Spada."

Spada is from what I know, the city state in the middle of continent adjacent to Daedalus's territory. [TN: Daidalos from now is changed to Daedalus.]

I've never been there, but it is pretty famous even among the numerous city-states in the Pandora continent.. Even a countryside adventurer like me knows about it after all.

"That's why I don't have that guild card, so let me show you mine—"

Saying so she once again rummages in her hat and takes out the card.

That was completely different from my metal plate guild card seeming like a dog tag, it was a real card seeming like a trading card made of cardboard.

The characters written on it are this world's peculiar alphabet.

『Fiona Soleil』

Looks like this is her name.

The fact that she has a surname means that she is a noble having special circumstances to have come here.

Well it's the courtesy of an adventurer to not pry in that area, I should ignore it.

Her class is also magician, the rank is also written but it's different from this guild's splitting method, so I don't know her rank exactly.

"If you're an adventurer you can live anywhere, but try to refrain from falling on the street to sleep."

"Yes, I also think if I have my stomach full all the time I will be happy."

No, that's not the damn problem here.....well whatever.

"Well then, we are going out of here, Fiona-san you should also go to village before it gets dark."

"Yes, let's meet again."

"Yeah, if an opportunity arises."

And then, I bid farewell to Fiona-san and once again start my way back.

But why do the villagers and Fiona-san also pronounce the popsicle as “eye scan ‘de’”
[TN: popsicle is said as ice candy in Japanese so they are speaking it as eye scan ‘de’]

CHAPTER 50

MEDIA RUINS

Currently I'm sitting in the guild lobby, staring at a certain request.

As I was pondering, once again today, Lily was playing with that fat cat in the corner of the room happily.

"You seem to be in deep thought Kurono-san."

As I turned to look back, the brains of the Irz Blader, Harry was standing there. Since he didn't have his bow with him, he probably came to either see some quests or to have lunch.

The other members might have gone to the item shop or blacksmith for other preparations probably.

"Yeah, this quest caught my eye so I'm thinking whether to take it or not." (kurono)

"—Investigation of the new area in Media ruins, is it?" (harry)

Sitting opposite of me, Harry read through the document.

"I did hear about a new area that had been discovered around last month." (harry)

There's barely anything left of the Media ruins above the earth except a cliff, but its true worth lies underneath it, in the underground centre.

The underground centre was not made by using a cave or cavity but a geofront made through the sole work people.

In this different world, an ancient civilisation that possessed super technology once existed.

The current Pandora continent does not have the capabilities to create such a geofront, but it did exist in the ancient times. By the way, this ancient civilisation

wasn't an advanced one in the science field like making flying cars etc. but was advanced in the field of magic.

And thus, only in the ruins of such a magically advanced civilisation will I find a magic big enough to send me back to my home.

"Come to think of it, Kurono-san was searching for ancient transfer and summoning magics, right?"(harry)

"Yeah, I was thinking maybe I could find my objective there."(kurono)

Such items haven't been discovered in the Media ruins yet, but, nobody knows what's there in the unexplored new area, so the probability isn't zero.

"Then, isn't it fine to accept this?"

"That may be so but, the fact that even rank 1 adventurers are allowed is kind of bugging me."

The danger rank of Media ruins is rank 4. The highest dungeon I have ever entered is at rank 4.

Although, if I am together with Lily, then we could even defeat a salamander so danger level is not really a problem, but.....

"Well, it certainly is suspicious."(Harry)

"Right?"(kurono)

It's a rank 4 dungeon, and an unexplored area to top it off (Though, it has been 1 month since it was discovered so I'm not going to be the first one.), so the danger would be even higher. Normally speaking, even a luggage carrier would have to be at least rank 2. But instead, they are basically saying anyone is fine, so it feels a bit unnatural.

"I don't want to get involved in troublesome things after all."(kurono)

"ahaha, Kurono-san is unexpectedly a cautious person."(harry)

"What do you mean by unexpected? Do you really see me as an idiot?"

I'm still a magician you know! Shouldn't that give me a naturally intelligent image?

"At the very least, you don't seem like an actual magician. After all Kurono-san, you have a pretty big and sturdy body. People with body like yours would usually be a swordsman or warrior."(harry)

As I looked around, I see lots of well built warriors drinking tea with other adventurers wildly.

"Even though, I'm not really training my body specially either."(kurono)

In fact I'm working hard in studying magic.

"But, looks really do matter, yeah."(kurono)

"No need to lament so much about it, hey, at least you won't be made fun of with that aggressive face of yours."(harry)

"Nah, I would've preferred to be slender like Harry."

"I'm a harpy so this the standard type of body though."

Maybe because they are meant to fly, Harpies usually have slender bodies.

Compared to humans, they certainly have less muscle and fat. Differences in races can be seen in other things other than outer appearance as well it seems.

Incidentally, Harry's magic speciality is wind magic. With the assist of wind magic, Harry's bow can rapid fire and strengthen arrows.

"Returning back to the topic, what do you think about this quest?"(Kurono)

"Hm, I think it would be fine if it's Kurono-san. And if Lily-san is also together, then there's no fear of getting tricked either."(harry)

Apparently Fairies don't associate with a bad person. That's not just a legend but actually somewhat true. They are able to read the opponents heart and feelings and can also use telepathy, so they can see through a person by meeting just once.

“I guess. In the worst case, if the client runs away, the guild will deal with it so I’ll get the reward at least.”

Even if a dangerous monster appeared, I’ll be able to run away at least. Although, I’ll be helpless if something like a cave-in occurred. But over thinking is not a trait of an adventurer.

Holding a little hope, I decided to accept the quest.

“Ah, but Kurono-san, you have to worry not just about the quest.”

“Nn?”

“Do you know about the location of Media ruins?”

“Although it’s my first time actually going there but---”

According to the map, it’s quite near the capital Daedalus.

“About that, it seems, coming and going out of Daedalus is being restricted now.”

“What do you mean?”

“I don’t know the details but, the human army from the Arc continent is currently fighting with them.”

“What? Weren’t they blockaded inside Virginia?”

“That was how it was supposed to be but, I wonder what happened?”

“Could it be that the situation has changed?”

“Yes apparently. The elites of the army have been practising and the dragon king is also the there. To fight against a dragon they must have brought something of equal strength to a dragon.”

“Dragon.....”

My strength is a bit more than a rank 4 salamander. If it is a dragon that could become a king, it would be atleast rank 5, that too among the strongest even in that rank.

Although I don't know exactly how strong that is, but maybe at least 100 of me would be needed to face something like that.

"Probably, they are undergoing some negotiations is the general rumour."(Harry)

Negotiations can be done only among those of equal stature.

If the rumour is correct, then does that mean that the human army possesses the same level of strength as Daedalus army?

Did they put the military strength in their own nation at lower priority? No if that was the case, then it would have ended when they attacked half-year ago.

That means, in that half year, there was a change in the situation of Virginia or of Daedalus.

What kind of change was it? I won't be able to understand considering it hasn't been long since I myself came here.

"Anyway, the atmosphere around Daedalus isn't very good right now. Although I don't know what exactly is happening, but you should be cautious of this more than the quest."(harry)

"I see, Thanks for the warning. If I learn something on the way, I'll tell you."

Having decided to accept the quest, I made my preparations during rest of the day, and left the Irz village the next day.

"—Yes, well then, please work hard Kurono-san."

Having accepted the quest officially, Nyarko who was standing behind the counter, accepted the certificate.

When you accept a quest of a far away land, such a certificate is issued.

Something like this is a first time for me, but since I'll put the certificate in the shadow space anyway, it doesn't really matter much.

"But Media ruins are pretty far away~You won't be returning to the village for quite a while, right?"(nyarko)

“Yeah, if I’m unlucky, I might not return until next month.”

“That’s not good. Please be back by the festival!”

“n, yeah, I want to take part in the festival as well.”

“That’s right! We are aiming to finish the complete menu of all the stalls after all!”

“Are you trying to sponge off me?”

“How rude! I’m a woman that can totally pay half the bill! But if you treat me a few times you will raise your favourable impression, don’t forget that.”

What will I do after raising something like that? Will she become able to play ‘hand’ with me?(T/N: I couldn’t explain this better but Kurono is basically joking about how owners teach their pets to raise their hands and shake with them. Those who own dogs or cats should understand better.)

“If this quest goes well, I’ll treat you to drink one time.”(kurono)

“As expected of Kurono-san! It’s a promise alright!”

“Only if it goes well, alright?”

“It’s fine! Kurono-san can do investigations quests easily!”

“I hope so. Now then, I’ll go now since Lily is waiting for me as well.”

“Yes, take care Kurono-san.”

Once again with Nyarko’s energetic voice behind me, I leave the guild.

As I opened the door, the members of Irz Blader were coming here.

“Leaving for the quest, Kurono?”

“Yeah, to Media ruins.”

“This time it’s to an unusually faraway place, did something happen?”

If it's a good quest then tell me, implied Nino with his eyes.

"It's a personal search. On top of it, the quest itself seems suspicious. If I didn't have my own reasons I would have ignored it."

"Is that so? Then be careful. Will you be able to come back by the festival?"

"That's the plan. I ended up promising Nyarko to treat her once as well after all."

"I see---wait a second, that means you'll be together with Nyarko during the festival!?"

"Ah.....sorry."

I realized it now. Crap, it's as if I stole a march on Nino and invited her.

"You IDIOT!!!"

Nino, who had started crying, threw his cat punch which I decided to take head on.

"Sorry, about Nyarko, well, try to invite her yourself with all you have got." (kurono)

"You just made it even more difficult!"

"If she refuses, then I'll help you on that day somehow."

".....really?"

"Leave it to me."

We shake hands. I'm still rooting for your love you know.

"haah, as usual he becomes pathetic when it comes to Nyarko. Well leaving that incompetent aside, Kurono treat me to something too~" (aten)

"Don't call me an incompetent, Aten." (nino)

"Kurono please~" (aten)

"Don't ignore me!!" (nino)

Aten pushes Nino away with her staff and looks at me with upturned eyes. Those eyes seem quite serious.

“....just once, alright?”

“Yay! It’s a promise alright!”

She gives a wide smile. But I can’t get fooled, Aten is definitely looking for the costliest sake in the village in her mind right now.

Maybe I was rash.....

“Kurono-san, you’re going on that quest, right?”(harry)

“Hm, yeah.”

Different from the incompetent leader and the money-minded woman, Harry asks with a serious face.

“Media ruins are filled with high ranked monsters not found near here. Be careful.”(claydor)

Claydor advised with a serious face.

Probably because these 2 are both serious type, Nino and Aten are usually like this other than during battles. Maybe this is also a kind of balance.....probably. Right, let’s leave it at that.

“Well then, see ya.”

“Ou, work hard!”

“Kurono! Don’t forget the promise!”

“Yes yes.”

Waving my hand without looking back, I walked towards the village gate where Lily was waiting for me.

CHAPTER 51

DEAD END

The territory of Daedalus begins from the eastern coastline of the continent and extends westwards till the Gallahad mountain range.

On the map of the Pandora continent, the Gallahad mountain range is placed slightly east of the centre of the continent. It extends towards the north and south in the form of an arc. A little further east from the centre of the mountains is our Irz Village.

Irz village is located on the western region inside the territory, and Daedalus is on the extreme eastern side. To go there, it will take about 1 week even with my legs.

And the destination this time, the Medea ruins, are located near that Daedalus. Travelling long distances is certainly difficult, but this is also something an adventurer cannot avoid. It's a good thing I have body that won't get tired even after walking continuously for 3 days and nights.

Adventurers that explore in the Medea ruins use a village known as Riol as the base camp, so I'm also aiming to go there.

Riol is also one of the villages located west of Daedalus.

Daedalus is the starting point of the five major highways. Among them, the biggest is the one leading to the port town in the south east (Virginia is located north-east), and the north-west one that goes through the Gallahad mountain range and leads to the city-state of Spada.

The former is to connect Daedalus to the port town flourishing with maritime trade and commerce, and the latter is made wide for the army to march through easily.

It was made wider to act as a route for the army when they eventually start a campaign in the centre of the continent, but the campaign hasn't started yet, so it is currently being used by big carriages to travel between villages.

But the route I'm currently taking is the much smaller south-west highway. The neighbouring village of Kuar acts as key point of transport as both the north-west and south west highways connect there.

The road between Irz-Kuar is a part of the north-west highway but it's the south-west highway that is directly connected to Riol village.

To enter the south-west highway from Irz, it was necessary to go to the adjoining Kuar village. It was a bit of a detour, but comparing the two highways, the south-west highway was a shorter route to Riol.

If I had a big carriage then I might have taken the north-west path, but all my items were inside my shadow space, and the only thing in my hands was the sleeping Lily, so it was obvious that I would chose the shortest one.

And so, without facing any problems, as I continued down the highway, I reached the last village before Riol. The name of the village was Enkul. It was a small peaceful village similar to Irz. Here I face an unexpected problem.

“Dead end? What do you mean by that?”

There was no problem in entering the Enkul village itself but the other gate leading to Riol was sealed shut. I had heard from Harry that entry and exit had been restricted but to think it had been completely stopped.

“There had been an order to seal all pathways leading to Daedalus. Even we don't know when the release order will come.”

The gatekeeper told me.

He was an Orc dressed in black full armour. He had a face that would scare the shit out of anyone if someone sees him walking at night but he told me the situation quite politely surprisingly.

By the way I am not talking politely because I'm scared or anything, I made it a rule to talk like this with anyone when meeting them for the first time.

“Currently, Daedalus is in negotiations with the humans of Arc continent but its details are completely unknown.”(orc)

"Then, it's true that Daedalus is currently negotiating with humans?"(kurono)

"Yeah, no doubt about it. Before the blockading order came, both armies battled it out on the Goldran hill. They are currently talking about post-war treatments probably."

"Was it such a large scale battle?"

"I don't know what those humans were like but, the Daedalus army had the Dragon king leading 20,000 men after all. That and the outcome of the battle, who won or lost, is still unclear means that the humans must have at least a large army of 100,000."

"The outcome is unclearDaedalus army didn't win?"

"Yes, although I didn't hear that they lost either. It must have been close enough to be called a draw, that's why it has become so troublesome now."

Then that means that the higher ups of Daedalus decided not to declare anything to the public until the negotiations with humans are fully settled because the result of the war wasn't very good.

It's not impossible. After all, the Daedalus army that has been making light of the human army was made to face a draw, so they can't just declare that to the public so easily either.

At least, the Orc gatekeeper and other villagers are of the same opinion.

But, for a moment, the worst situation possible situation came into my mind.

Could it be that the Daedalus army actually lost to them?

"You were going to the Medea Ruins right? Too bad but this also part of my job so I can't allow you to go any further. Shouldn't it be better to just abandon the quest and return back to your village?"(orc)

".....I guess so. It's a pity but I'll go back."(kurono)

As I looked for the Enkul village guild, I moved away from the gate.

Right now, I should just listen to the gate keeper and finish the formalities to abandon the quest.

“Kurono.....”

Maybe because she read the anxiety in my heart or maybe it was shown on my face, Lily looked at me worriedly.

“It’s alright. Is what I want to say but I just can’t help but get this bad feeling—
“(kurono)

The Daedalus army tied with the Human army and this information has not yet been made official was the opinion of every village surrounding Daedalus including Enkul.

Well they were right in thinking that the government had decided not to declare the outcome of the war, but they were completely wrong about the details of that outcome.

Daedalus army had not tied with the Human army but had been completely defeated by them. Moreover, the dragon king Gaevinal had been killed as well.

Also, it was rumoured that they were in negotiations with the Human army but in fact Daedalus had already been completely occupied by the Crusaders that won on the Goldran hill.

Well then why did the human army, even after killing the dragon king and occupying Daedalus, had decided to seal all routes and information?

There are a few reasons.

Firstly, the representative of the victor Crusaders, Archbishop Liuchrome had demanded this from the Daedalus side. After the battle of Goldran, the Crusaders had just enough numbers to occupy Daedalus. He didn’t want this information about lack of forces to leak outside.

In case, they announced the occupation of Daedalus grandly then other units of the army located through the territory or the armies of other city-states might invade Daedalus.

The remnants of Daedalus army might try to take revenge for the death of their dragon king and charge with the resolve to die an honourable death, and other city-states might see this as a chance to expand their territory by capturing Daedalus that was in the middle of chaos.

If the info about the lack of forces in the Crusaders were revealed, then the chances of both the parties attacking would become even higher.

Liuchrome thus decided to conceal information and instead gave away vague info like [Daedalus is negotiating with the Crusaders] to buy time for the reinforcements to come from their homeland. This was the truth behind the sealing and blockade of Daedalus, on surface the reason was to avoid confusion among the citizens.

Again, even the Daedalus side were resistant to declare that the dragon king had been killed in action.

It could be said that they were also wishing for this so as a result they quickly accepted Liuchrome's demands, and the blockade was quickly applied.

Currently, approximately 1 month had passed after Daedalus had been occupied.

Everything went according to plan, no armies tried invading Daedalus, and the homeland sent reinforcements to Virginia one by one.

That's not all. In this 1 month, Liuchrome took over all controlling rights, and along with the info manipulation, also kept the Crusades in check. Daedalus was in control without any chaos or revolts.

The church believers were all of the opinion that demons were meant to be exterminated, but Liuchrome who took calm and rational judgements did not rashly oppress all the other races that lived here and did not allow his subordinates to do so either.

He, even if the other party were enemies, did not enjoy ruthlessly massacring people. Indulging in such things will only satisfy the greed of the worthless scum and will also stimulate opposition from the citizens. From the point of view of a ruler, it had zero merits.

In controlling a defeated country, Liuchrome was truly humane as well as understanding, truly an ideal ruler.

But, the people of the church and republic were not all like him. In fact, people like Liuchrome were very rare existences, but the people of Daedalus did not know that.

He, who was here, was also the same.

“aah.....my lord, my king.....why.....”

That voice echoed inside the empty throne room.

1 month ago, on that decorated throne, sat a man who had an overwhelming presence, truly a king.

The king's name was Gaevinal, a black dragon with incredible abilities.

And the man who was here was a human who had been serving that dragon king even before Daedalus was founded.

As Gaevinal's right hand man, he had become the Prime minister now.

“Why.....why did this.....”

As the Prime minister who manages the country, he could not show his emotions in public, but right now that façade had been completely broken and tears were falling out of his eyes.

“uuu.....”

Till this day, he had directly negotiated with Liuchrome, as the representative of Daedalus.

Negotiation, were in name only. Daedalus that had lost had no other choice but to give everything away to the victors, that is the Crusaders.

All he could do was to ask for proper treatment of the citizens that had followed his respected and beloved dragon king.

“No more.....I have nothing else I can do.....”

Tomorrow, the blockades will be lifted, and finally the Crusaders would begin their genuine rule.

The death of the dragon king will be announced to all of the citizens and the country known as Daedalus would collapse and would be annexed into the Syncorea Republic.

Hereafter, he would either be executed after being charged with some crime or made to cooperate with the Republic.

In any case, he has one last duty to fulfil.

Today, on the last day of the Daedalus, he had finally reached his limits.

“My king.....”

In the first place, he had sworn to be with Gaevinal in life and death.

These were his true feelings.

To him, Gaevinal was an absolute existence, and he truly believed that he should have followed him the moment he heard of his death.

As a result, finishing all his duties, now that the country Gaevinal created was finally collapsing, he had lost all reason to live.

“I’ll be by your side.....”

In this empty throne room, there was no one who could stop him.

In his left arm, he held a Gaevinal’s scale and in his right he held a container.

A brilliant red liquid was filled inside that container.

And, without any hesitation, he drank the red poison in a single breath.

“Gah——“

Instantly falling on his knees, he fell face front on the ground.

The poison quickly circulated inside his body, and in a matter of seconds, he passed away.

“All hail.....Dragon king.....”

Anyone who saw his current appearance would feel pity for him.

But the fact that he did not have to witness the gruesome trampling of the Daedalus territory that was going to start from here onwards, he might have been the most fortunate person.

CHAPTER 52

FEAR REVIVED

It's 12th day of Shinyou month, the sky is already dyed red and soon the night would come.

While thinking that I rush along the highway.

The destination is not Irz Village, but Daedalus.

"I thought I would reach it before sun sets, but it looks like it's still far."

I feel bad for Lily who is clinging on my neck while inside the hood of robe. But no matter what, I want to know about the situation of Daedalus.

Ignoring the orders for no public crossing, I am heading towards Daedalus. If the worst case happens and I'm spotted by any of the Daedalus soldiers it can't be helped if I'm thrown in jail.

The biggest reason for taking such a big risk for going to Daedalus is the uneasy feeling swirling inside my heart.

I'm not convinced about the groundless uneasy feeling, but I still couldn't ignore it.

If Daedalus was defeated by the human army, then the whole Pandora continent will be engulfed in war.

Surely, many people will laugh at my thinking, regarding it as delusion.

However, I know the what actions an 'invader' takes due to my knowledge in previous world. Furthermore, I know the cruelty of the people wearing cross uniforms through this body.

This world with magic is not some sort of fairytale story. I was summoned here against my will and was set up in experiments equivalent to torture and was also forced to fight against fellow experimental subjects too.

If those bastards invade in great numbers, then the Pandora continent will go through the path that I've learned from history lessons.

In brief, the peaceful life I have built in Irz Village is in danger.

In the first place, I came to Pandora Continent to run away from the cross uniform bastards, even if they are not here following me their searching range will be expanded eventually.

Therefore, to prevent the danger to me, my livelihood, and Pandora too, I came to the conclusion to go to Daedalus.

I really am feeling bad for taking Lily, more than half the reason she's here is for my own self-protection.

Of course, I tried sending her to Irz Village when we left the Enkul Village, but Lily being stubborn didn't nod at my words.

Definitely, Lily got a feeling that I'm in going to a dangerous place, so she might have chose to follow me.

I've made a decision already, to let Lily escape if we both get caught in a dire situation.

“— — That is Daedalus, huh?”

Though the surroundings are dark, my reinforced eyes catch a glimpse of the rumoured big castle walls of Daedalus far in the distance.

And so, I left the highway and started crossing through the forest.

I'm most likely to be discovered if I keep on walking on the highway, so it's better to continue until Daedalus while sneaking.

The Riol Village I passed some hours ago had its doors completely shut and was quiet.

But, what about Daedalus?

From what I can see, there are no signs of destroyed castle walls.

Was it not a big scale castle siege war? Or is the opposite side of the castle wall broken?

I rush through the forest while holding my breath with my thoughts in a confusion.

“Great, It so big——”

Finally I came close to the Daedalus castle walls.

The wall standing majestically in front me can make someone think about a precipitous cliff.

The trees of forest are stopped where I'm standing. There is nothing to hide myself in between the walls and me.

If there was a tall tree I can invade by climbing it, or if there were big bushes I can approach while being unnoticed. It is natural to have those ideas when there is nothing in front of castle walls.

The problem is, how to reach the walls without being noticed.

Come to think of it, the first place I infiltrated the port town had low security that's why I was transported easily.

I had already been predicted that it won't be as easy as the previous time but.....

“I don't see a single person.”

From the looks of it, there doesn't seem to be a single soldier present here.

Thirty metres above there is a passage present on the top of wall, but there is no sign of patrolling soldiers, of course the same can be said for the outside circumference of walls.

Perhaps even though they are patrolling it's not like they can monitor each and every section of outer wall.

If it's like that it's not much of a big deal to approach the walls, and to climb the 30 metres walls is an easy feat for this body along with black magic.

Now the problem left is,

“The barrier, huh. It's my first time seeing a genuine one.”

Unlike the shield, a barrier is a defensive magic that completely covers the target and can be maintained 24×7 hours a day.

It blocks all the attacks from outside and monitors the presence of intruders within a fixed region and various other functions...

The only barrier I have and know of is Efreet, aka 『Mosquito Repellent』 , which deploys a barrier of flame to keep mosquitoes away.

And at the present time, there is a large scale barrier standing with Daedalus as its origin.

It's not a shining bright light, rather it's colorless and transparent, but even me who is standing 500 metres away from it can feel the strong magical pressure it exerts.

The difference in defensive ability with that 『Mosquito Repellent』 is like that of heaven and earth.

Due to this powerful barrier there are no other soldiers except for at the main gate, probably.

The magic used by this barrier is white magic. It seems impossible to invade through just brute strength as my black magic has extremely bad compatibility with the white magic

But however, the current me is not alone, I have a reliable partner!

“Lily can you open a hole in that barrier?”

“Un——I can!”

The white magic used by Sariel and the light magic used by Lily have completely different origins.

The light magic also acts a counter for my black magic like the white magic, whereas it is also classified as a color magic.

But still, they are both different. If it's Lily who has good compatibility with her magic and excels at controlling it too she can pierce a hole through the powerful barrier.

"Well the, Let's go—"

I grab Lily under one arm and run the 500 metres at full speed.

Being coupled with the black clothes I doubt I will be found out. Please God don't let me found out.

I don't know whether my prayer was heard or it was inevitable but I safely reached the walls.

And though it can't be seen through naked eyes, there is a barrier standing.

It might be a barrier that restricts physical intrusion, or it can be like the one place on the treasure box which gives out electric shocks.

Until I know it's nature, It's a bad idea to touch it.

Even though I know letting Lily touch such a thing is SO SINFUL, but here I can't do anything other than relying on her powers.

"I'll leave it to you."

"Yeah!"

Lily touches the invisible barrier with her both hands.

From the point of contact, the white light ripples as if a rock has been thrown onto water's surface.

"Nh—"

Lily's two pairs of seven coloured wings sometimes flap and her white lit body flickers.

I feel for Lily who is seriously trying to pierce through the barrier, but this glittering light is unreasonably standing out.

It doesn't matter if there are no soldiers here, but in this dark night the shining Lily can be spotted from 100 metres away rather easily.

The only thing I can do to help her not be spotted is just covering her with my robe.

It's pretty nerve-wracking, but I still wait in silence for its completion.

How much time had passed? Maybe not even 3 minutes have passed but due to nervousness it's feeling twice the length, then suddenly Lily speaks.

“It’s open!”

Not the meaning of 「It’s painful」 but rather 「it’s open」 she said. [TN: In Japanese “Aita” means it’s open and “Ah itta” means painful. Both sound similar that’s why author is deliberately explaining it.]

Upon looking in front of Lily, there is an faintly shining circle drawn in empty air.

The circle is big enough for me pass easily, When I pass my hand through it I don’t feel anything out of place.

Looks like she’s succeeded in piercing the barrier.

“You did well, Leave the rest to me.”

I pat at Lily’s head, while she rejoices like a puppy.

I would also want to leave everything and keep on patting her, but there’s not time for that.

Putting Lily once again in the hood, I jump through the circle in the castle ward.

“Let’s go in one shot.”

Compared from the time I laboriously climbed the walls of the port city, my magic skills have also improved.

After all, I conquered a cliff of 100 metres to just invade the nest of a Garuda, If I use the rock climbing magic skill I used at that time, this 30 metre stone wall is just a child asking to be climbed.

To look cool in front of Lily who worked hard to open a hole in wall, I activate the magic while doing a signature pose.

“Anchor release!”

From the palms of both hands, a black wire flies out along the wall.

The wire with a harpoon like object at its tip sinks deep at the top of the wall.

At that time the rear of the wire starts to coil around the hand, hips, thighs, and the sole of my feet.

It's alright with just coiling around hands, but it'll help in more balance while climbing if there is a back support.

"Let's go."

After listening Lily's reply, I retract the wire at once.

While being pulled by wire, I rushed up the vertical wall in one spurt.

This "anchor" is the same famous wire action that sometimes appears in action games. It is also called as 'hookshot' or 'grappling beam'. In short it is using a wire to move on a vertical surface like 'TARZAN'. [TN: AIYAIYAIYAIAYIA. pfft]

My black magic can materialize simple objects like bullets and much more, and also excels at controlling them. If there is a really good imagination, then making a retractable wire is easy.

Using this "anchor" climbing a wall of 30 metres is as same as running on flat ground.

In several seconds I climbed the wall and land near the passage.

"No one is he.....re?"

There really is not person near the passage.

While paying utmost attention, I looked towards the Daedalus city below the walls.

Below is a very vast street of houses and shops. It's so big that many Irz villages can fit in it.

And the walls are covering it whole. It's a tremendously big city.

If it's a normal person they would have gone to bed by this time of night. In the corner of what is apparently a residential area are some houses with lights on whereas as red-light district seeming area is full of bright lights.

Even among them, the most noticeably shining is the castle of Daedulus.

The castle is covered by walls. From here the ground and the first floor of castle cannot be seen.

Even so, there is light glittering from there which is shining on the very large castle in the dark night.

Looking at that, I start to heave a sigh at its majesticness .

But, the moment I saw the flag hanging from the castle, I gulped down the sigh I was going to release.

“That is the.....the cruciform symbol.....”

The flag there was not the national flag of Daedalus with the dark emblem imitating King Gaevinal but it was the flag with an emblem of cruciform symbol which seemed to me like annoying madness.

“It’s a lie, right.....That means the human army, are them.”

If I look closely, inside the city there are various sizes of the same flag hanging.

This scene was frankly saying the fact that Daedalus has been occupied by the Crusaders.

“Tsk, Damn It—”

It's the worst, it's a nightmare, the worst case scenario I thought has turned into a reality.

I found out that the cruciform symbolled flag is not hoisted by a cult of humans, but is the national flag of Syncorea Republic.

Slowly, depairs starts spreading inside my heart.

Those bastards, Those damn bastards really did come to Pandora Continent in great numbers.

The fact that they have occupied Daedalus can only mean that there is no other force that can oppose them.

A big country like Daedalus is easily captured in a blink of an eye.

These bastards are planning to conquer the whole Pandora Continent, and do that not so far in future.

What should I do? Should I fight? Or escape?

“Damn.....”

The Dragon King who is more powerful than me was defeated even when he was leading an army. They're not the enemy I can fight against. Even in the world of magic it's impossible for an individual to win against a whole country.

So should I really run? But to where? Is there anyplace these bastards won't come?

Damn it, shit, no matter how much I think nothing good comes to mind.

No matter what I think, I can only imagine these bastards coming towards me with their cross in their hands.

What should I do—

Kurono!!”

“—!?”

Lily jumps at my chest and tightly hugs me.

“It's alright, Lily will save Kurono. Even if bad guys come, I will protect you!”

Lily spouts some tremendous lines. Even though I didn't say any words, Lily who can read a person's mind feels my uneasy feeling.

“.....”

I cuddle Lily who is clinging onto me.

The faint warmth I feel at my hands and chest brings me back to my sanity and removes the uneasy feeling.

Argh, damn it, I showed an uncool side of me to Lily.

“Lily, I’m alright.”

That’s right. Now I’m not alone and I can’t only think about myself only from now on.

Just like Lily said she’d protect me, I will also have to protect Lily.

I definitely won’t let those bastards take away my peaceful life once again.

“It’s dangerous being here, let’s leave.”

“Yeah.”

Due to the restriction on information spreading, the news of Daedalus occupation is still not reached to any other village.

If I don’t do anything, these bastards will attack all the villages within Daedalus territory.

It’s impossible for me to resist until the bitter end, but I can escape from here.

If it’s no good to run within Daedalus territory, I can only run to other countries.

Well, the problem is whether the enemy nation Spada’s city state army will let me in or not. If they don’t I’ve got no choice but to do an illegal immigration.

First I need to tell this info to the nearest village, No, I don’t even know if they will hear my story who is only a rank 1 adventurer. The only route for me here is to talk to Village Head of Irz village to exert influence on other villages.

I once again start racking my mind for what to do from now on. Just as soon I started to make an anchor for going down the wall.

“—What might you be doing here?”

I heard a voice!... Spidey sixth sense alert!!!!

A voice of refreshing and beautiful little girl.

Before even thinking that the voice is familiar, a face of certain person rose up in my mind in an instant.

When I turn back to look, there stood the girl not any different from what I imagined.

A beautiful girl with platinum long hair, along with a pair of two big red eyes, wearing a vestment with cruciform symbol.

The girl, who showed me overwhelming power and the origin of my overwhelming fear is....

“.....Sariel.”

There stood the strongest person I know of, 7th Apostle Sariel.

CHAPTER 53

CRUSADE'S SUPREME COMMANDER

Under the starry sky, Sariel and Kurono are standing facing each other.

Kurono forgets about his cold sweat flowing, and faces head on with Sariel as if to hide Lily.

“Kurono Maou.”

He hasn't been called that in a long time, no for Kurono, it was for the first time to be called by his full name in this world.

To a devotee of the cross religion, it might seem as god's words to them but to Kurono, it only seemed as the whisper of grim reaper.

The uneasy feeling of his was settled down by Lily, but immediately after seeing a danger in front of his eyes, the fear torments Kurono's heart once again.

But still, due to Lily behind his back, he breaks free of fear's grasp and various trains of thoughts come to his mind.

Kurono thinks, the fact that his name was called means that this isn't a situation he will be killed with no questions asked.

“What are you been doing here?”

He is once again questioned.

If I don't answer would I be instantly killed, If I answer would I be killed even so'. Kurono who can't think of any situation favorable to him, speaks in half despair.

“It's Tourism. The walls of Daedalus are famous, right?”

“I see. However it's better if you don't do it right now.”

Kurono was surprised at the fact that Sariel took his joke to be real. He was lucky that he didn't get a white stake which can pierce the shield easily in return , and didn't think any further.

"Sorry for that, I would be grateful if you let me return back quietly?"

"Yes, you can go."

With an tremendous answer in return, even Kurono who had been keeping his poker face opened his eyes wide.

"Is it really alright?"

"Yes."

Kurono tries to examine through Sariel's expression, it is similar to the first he met her.

Kurono thinks that if he just gets away like this, he won't be pierced.

He also thinks that Sariel might have no intention to kill them on that place.

「.....Do you mind if I ask you something?」

Kurono thought that if Sariel has no intention to kill him even if he doesn't run from here, then he can use this opportunity to gather some information.

Kurono doesn't know anything about Crusaders. In the first place, He doesn't know that the one leading the army of people called as "Crusaders" is Sariel.

"What is it?"

As expected, Sariel replied.

"Why did you come to Pandora continent?"

"Our lord 『White God』 desires this land. Therefore, we "Crusaders" came to this land to offer it to him."

"Is it for propagating the cross wielding religion."

“Yes, It will eventually turn out to change the religion of every person on Pandora continent to that of Cross.”

The Crusaders and then Cross religion, they more or less seem like the Christianity religion. Perhaps, the Cross religion and Syncera Republic have deep relation between them. Long story short, it is a religious country or so Kurono guessed.

And thought that it starts as the propagation of Christianity and leads to colonization pattern.

“Do you guys know, what result will your actions cause?”

“Yes, A lot of blood has been spilled by now, it will also keep on from now on.”

“Do you have no intention for retreat?”

“Until our lord desires it.”

Kurono exhales a single breath.

He had predicted the answers without needing for Sariel to answer.

In short, they have no intention to retreat and will cruelly kill anyone who opposes to them.

“The King of Daidalos, is he dead?”

“Yes, I killed him.”

Kurono was not shocked at the fact that the Dragon King was killed, rather he was shocked to learn that Sariel had the power to kill an existence everyone said “can’t be killed”.

“So, what will happen to Daedalus from now on?”

“I will be getting everything within Daedalus territory.”

“You will?”

Sariel didn’t say 「We will」 but 「I will」 .

Kurono always thought that no matter how great she is, she is only a soldier in the end.

However, from her way of speaking, it only seems that his thoughts were wrong.

And Sariel says the words that confirm it,

“I’m the Supreme Commander of Crusader after all.”

Kurono suddenly understood, that she is the one who leads the crusaders, the top brass.

“I see.....”

Kurono turns back and face his back towards Sariel. He takes Lily from the hood, who didn’t budge even a little and took her out.

While feeling Sariel’s gaze at his back, Kurono crouches and embraces Lily.

“Fue!?”

Lily raises her voice due to suddenly being hugged, Kurono without minding it, whispered in her ears.

“Lily, tell everything to Shione – san everything you will hear now.”

“Eh?”

While hearing Kurono’s words Lily, felt within his heart was a great fear and sorrow and the ‘courage’ which is pushing them back.

“Kurono——”

Kurono guessed that Lily has read his true motives already, he grabs her in his arms once again.

“——Nooo!!”

“Thank you for being with me till now, It’s goodbye.”

Kurono while holding Lily with his left hand, threw her with his full strength towards the forest.

“Kuronoo——”

Lily is thrown with a terrible speed. Sensing danger to her automatic defense “shield” activates which covers her whole body. Leaving a trail of white light, she flies away.

“Sorry, Lily.”

Kurono who murmured those words was already holding the ‘*Black Ballista Replica*’ in his right hand.

Facing towards Sariel, who was staring him, he wielded his baton.

CHAPTER 54

ASSASSINATION PLAN

“.....What are you planning to do?”

The full metal jacket bullet I fired was stopped by the inverted triangular white shield just like that time.

This time, the only difference is that a small crack appeared.

I can do this.

“Magic bullet – Bullet Arts.”

As I lightly swung the baton like a conductor, black bullets appeared in a spiral formation around my body.

The thousands of bullets that appeared around me are all made by the highest level of composition of black magic. Moreover, due to the baton's abilities, every bullet holds more power than a normal [anti material].

“Fire all bullets – Full Burst.”

I released all the bullets towards Sariel at once.

Black muzzle flash and firing sound, along with the sound of destruction of castle wall on which Sariel stood, resounded in the silent night.

Instantly, dust rose up and the visibility got blocked, but I already know even without seeing that Sariel is not there anymore.

Just before I fired, I saw her jump away from the castle wall.

“I won't let her get away—“

Shooting Anchor from beneath my legs, I chased Sariel and jumped down from the wall.

“—I can’t let her get away!!”

As I threw myself in mid-air, I saw the grassland that I had been running on just some time ago.

Without any where to hide, also without any reason to hide, Sariel stood there in her white dress like a ghost.

“Magic sword – Sword Arts.”

I grabbed the wire with my left arm and raise the baton with my right.

As my robe fluttered in mid-air, I opened my shadow space and brought out 3 blackened long swords.

I bought these from the blacksmith shop at the Irz Village.

“Pierce through!!”

Before my body reached the ground, I launched the 3 swords towards Sariel.

One made an arc and approached from the left, similarly one approached from the right, and one charged directly towards her and attacked her.

“___”

I didn’t hear, but I saw her lips moving, and at the same time I landed on the ground. A small shock ran through my legs.

Since I used the wire to decelerate myself, I landed without giving any chance to attack--

Bagin!!

“!?”

A sound resounded near my legs. The 4 white stakes, Sariel used, had pierced through hem of my robe and sewn it to the castle wall.

But none of them had pierced through my body so it must be to stop my movement.

But when were these stakes fired? I couldn't see them at all.

As I moved my eyes to confirm it, I once again looked back towards Sariel. She had a slender spear of the same colour as her stakes in her left hand. On its spearhead, as if catching fish with a spear, my three swords were lined up together with their centres pierced.

And, just as I had once seen before, the three blackened swords were instantly invaded by her white magical energy and scattered to dust.

“Goddamn monster.....”

Whether it be the speed of the stakes or the way to destroy my swords, I was once again made to realize the difference in our powers.

Slowly, regret and fear spread inside me, and I had a sudden impulse to start crying and beg for my life.

Sarier slowly came towards me and spoke.

“Will you stop resisting?”

I almost gave an affirmation to her words, but somehow stopped myself by grinding my teeth.

“I have no intention to hurt you.”

I hate myself to have felt relieved from those words.

“Will you retreat quietly?”

Running faraway with Lily was an extremely charming offer, but I use my full strength to reject it.

“haha....”

I laughed with a shaky, pathetic voice.

“Who will miss this chance——“

I raised my voice, and cheered myself up.

I forcibly escaped the stakes while tearing the pierced parts of the robe.

I swung my baton and materialised bullets and at the same time brought out 10 long swords this time.

Moreover, I hold the cursed hatchet [Tsujigiri] in my left hand.

“Sariel! I’ll kill you here and stop the crusaders!!”

“Is that so.....”

Facing my full magical energy as well as bloodlust head, there was not a single change in her sculpture like face. She didn’t even take a stance with her spear.

That’s fine, that composure of yours will become my chance of winning—

“Let’s go!!”

“Because I’m the supreme commander of the Crusaders.”

Sariel definitely said that.

If not for those words, right now I would have been running along with Lily on the highway.

But, I recklessly challenged Sariel, no, that’s not it, lives are on line here. This is an assassination.

[Assassination] is to kill by using a gap in the opponent’s defence. If going by those words, then this moment is Sariel’s ‘gap’.

As the top of the Crusaders, to have appeared without any guards; if there was an assassin, there was not any better situation than this.

Even now, not a single soldier has come to assist Sariel and it’s still one-on-one. Conveniently, for some reason, Sariel is not trying to kill me.

If she wanted, she could pierce through my heart any time no doubt about it. But to have tried to pin me to the wall is a proof.

This robe is a high class good with defensive ability higher than a steel plate mail. For a second I was worried that the robe had lost its magic and become a normal cloth.

Basically, my life is in danger. This is the only chance for me to defeat her.

But why did I have to take this chance with my life on the line?

If it was the me 2 months earlier, I had nothing more important than my own life. I would never put it in danger.

But, now I have things I want to protect even at the cost of my life.

Lily and Irz village, even though it hasn't been very long, I still can't let the Crusaders do whatever they want.

I will never trust these bastards who wear crosses. I don't care if it was something wished by God, but that's nothing more than using a god's name to kill, steal and destroy.

In the end, the Crusaders are big enough to have invaded and occupied Daidalos.

If the Daidalos army fell to them means that the Crusaders are very strong. I don't know if even other countries would be able to win against them.

But what will happen if the top of the Crusaders is killed here? I don't know how the chain of command of Crusaders work but if the commander dies then an organisation shouldn't be able to sustain itself.

I don't know how much authority Sariel herself possesses, but I do know that she is a major part of their military force.

If the top loses, the invasion plan would definitely be largely affected, or maybe, it might end all together. At least the effect would be much better than fighting the whole Crusaders head on.

But, that's only if I am able to successfully complete this assassination.

I am well aware of how strong Sariel is. In terms of level, it's a gap between 1 and 100.

But, even if this is a magic world, doesn't mean it's a game world. There are always ways if you want to 'just kill' someone.

It doesn't matter how hard I have to try if I can just kill her, I'm fine even if I am able to take her down together with me.

If that can save Lily and the villagers, then I'll bet my life as many times as I can!!

CHAPTER 55

BLACK MAGICIAN VS. APOSTLE

“Let’s go!!”

Swinging my baton, I once again release a storm of bullets towards Sariel.

“Shield.”

As Sariel whispered, a white inverted triangular shield appeared in front of her.

[Shield] is one of the most basic defensive magic, a normal magician would never be able to block my bullet storm with just a shield.

But, Sariel’s shield blocked all the bullets and sustained only a few bullet marks.

Even the same magic would be completely different if the magician is different, wait, this isn’t the time to be impressed.

“Not yet!!”

From behind the bullets, a black sword stuck right at the point where the shield had a little crack due to the bullets.

Finally the shields were pierced and broke with the sound of breaking glass.

“With this—“

I attacked with more black swords, one from the same path as earlier and 3 from above.

All them came flying towards Sariel in the very moment the shield broke.

But, she had already moved away from there to evade them.

Although I was unable to catch when she actually moved, I had already predicted that she would evade.

The remaining 5 swords were already flying from the back of where Sariel was standing before.

Sariel who had jumped backwards was attacked by the 5 black swords from further behind.

“—how’s that!”

“Stakes – Sagita.”

This time, Sariel used a basic attack magic.

The moment that voice reached my ears, I lost the sensation of all 10 swords.

Why? I don’t even have to think about it. The answer is in front of me.

The swords that were stuck in the ground as well those that were flying were all crushed by the stakes, no, bullets fired by Sariel.

“Will you stop attacking?”(sariel)

“hah, is that the first thing you say after stealing someone’s magic?”(kurono)

“.....”

Sariel lifted her index finger of her right hand as if pointing towards me. In front of it, a white bullet similar to my Anti Material took form.

Although, its size was the same as the stakes, i.e. 30cm, rather than bullet this was big enough to be called a cannon shell.

“Your original magic is certainly unique and powerful—“

The white bullet in front of her started rotating.

At the pointed end, white magical energy started revolving in a helix.

“—but it cannot kill me.”

“Shield!?!?”(kurono)

As I constructed the shield in front of me, at the same time Sariel fired the shell.

That shell that was even faster than my bullets, similar to that time, pierced through even my improved and stronger shield easily.

“Kuh—“

Instantly my left hand reacted and the blade of the cursed hatchet crossed with the shell.

Gagin!!

With a high pitched metallic sound, I somehow deflected the shell.

Due to the shock, my stance got collapsed, and stumbled two-three steps behind and managed not to fall down somehow.

As I returned my sight in front of me, Sariel had disappeared from there.

“Where—“

Before my eyes, I sensed her location instinctively——above me.

As I looked up, with the crescent moon as background, Sariel was flying towards me with the spear in her left hand.

I don't have time to recreate a shield; even if I had it'll get pierced through anyway.

“oooohh!!!”

I met the spear coming from the sky with my cursed hatchet.

The clash of the edges gave off sparks.

“.....hard.”(Sariel)

Maybe she was planning to destroy the hatchet with a single attack, Sariel landed as she said that.

Even though both of us are in each other's cutting range, we remain still.

“That’s my line.”(Kurono)

Uptil now this cursed hatchet had been able to slice through anything. This was the first time its blade was stopped.

“It’s a cursed weapon, it’s impossible to destroy it with that lump of magical energy.”(kurono)

Sariel’s spear was, in a way, similar to the white stakes. It was simply materialised by pressing your own magical energy together.

It’s the same as her using her hand as a sword and I was using a knife.

“If that broke, will you leave this place?”(Sariel)

Just a little, I felt that Sariel’s gaze got sharper.

Even now, she is allowing me to run away.

“If you want to stop me———“(kurono)

I took stance with the hatchet in my left hand and loaded bullets in the baton in my right.

Furthermore, from my shadow, I brought out 10 blackened swords and deployed them around in a circle.

“then come with the intent to kill!!”(kurono)

“That’s too bad.”(sariel)

As she said that, at the same time, a silver aura burst out of Sariel.

I have seen that aura before as well. Now that I have learnt a bit more about magic, I can confirm that it’s not any enhancement magic but simply magical energy leaking out.

In short, she has gotten a bit serious, but that’s it.

Although I still don't know the extent of her powers, I instinctively as well as rationally understand that she is revealing more than enough power to kill me.

I won't last long against Sariel clad in her aura, no, I might fall in a single clash.

There is a 5m of distance between us. The time between the moment when Sariel leaps towards me and pierces my body with that spear is the last chance I will have.

"I'm coming—“(Sariel)

At the same time Sariel said that, I release the bullets from my baton. It heads directly for the forehead of Sariel that was approaching me.

Direct hit, but it is unable to pierce through the silver aura and vanished like the mist without dealing any damage.

Maybe even the blackened swords will not be able to pierce through, I thought that, but that doesn't change the fact that I need to use all 10 swords to intercept Sariel.

From the front, I aimed for the forehead, neck, chest, stomach, and groin with 5 swords in a straight vertical line, and the crown of the head and the limbs were attacked by the remaining five.

"Stakes."

Similar to before, white bullets accurately shot down the 5 swords coming from above, left and right. The 5 coming from the front were cleanly destroyed with one swing of the spear.

But, the distance between us is currently 3m.

If I take one step, I could cut her. To take it on, she will have to bring back the spear used to destroy the swords. But, in this close range, that will become a fatal mistake.

"haa!!!"

Dropping the baton, I held the hatchet with both hands and I stepped in to deliver a powerful slash.

Even though I have never learned swordfighting, but together with my enhanced body and the abilities of the hatchet itself, I can produce strength enough to cut through her aura along with her body.

The hatchet that was swung sideways, its blade certainly cut through her aura, but the moment it was about to reach her thin body,

Gakin!!

It was blocked with the spear that had somehow returned back to place.

“—”

Our gazes crossed.

Even though expressionless, her eyes appealing to end this fight.

The fact that my attack, that was made while she had already swung her spear, was stopped means that she can make two swings with her weapon in the same time I swing once. That's how high her attack speed is.

If she is that fast, by the time I attack next, she could freely choose any part of body and pierce through it.

I can't attack with the cursed hatchet anymore, bullets didn't work in the first place, I used up all my swords with the last 10, and I have no way to counter-attack between the time her spear swings and attacks me.

Probably, Sariel is thinking the same thing.

And that will be my only chance at victory.

“—now.”

From the shadow space I opened near my legs, I fire a single black needle from the darkness.

That needle is [Basilisk's bone needle], a ‘cursed weapon’ I never got to use after buying it at Irz Village.

The moment it stabs, it starts corroding the body, a simple yet dreadfully effective poison needle.

If the wielder himself touches it he'll also get poisoned so it is treated as 'curse'.

But, this needle can pierce through Sariel's aura, if I can hit her once more then I can deal a fatal blow.

And in actuality, the poison needle came into contact with the silver aura, started corroding it and flew directly towards the heart.

"Is this your trump card?"(Sariel)

And sure enough, the needle was unable to reach her heart.

"Kuh....."

The needle was fired at the same speed as that of a bullet but, Sariel moved faster than that, and that's all it took.

The right hand that had not yet moved until now, before I realized it, had moved over her right chest to protect her and her palm had blocked the needle.

The needle that had pierced through her palm completely only reached her robe and stopped there.

Sariel who had taken it with her bare hands, the corrosion of the poison began to spread.

But still, Sariel without seeming even a little bit agitated, took a step back and used her spear to pierce through her whole palm along with the needle.

The needle was smashed, and the poisoned flesh was instantly shaved off, thus stopping the corrosion.

As blood gushed out, a painful looking hole could be seen on Sariel's palm.

All I could do was be dumbfounded as I looked at this chain of events.

Dotsu

Suddenly, a shock ran through my left arm.

I realized that Sariel had attacked with her spear when I saw that the cursed hatchet had fallen to the ground.

“Guh.....”

Probably, my left wrist is broken.

It'll heal by itself sooner or later but it won't do so instantly, I don't even have the time to pick up the cursed hatchet either.

All plans were broken through, and I don't even have a weapon in my hands now.

I still have magical energy left, but I don't have any magic that could be activated faster than Sariel attacking with her spear.

It was checkmate. In this situation where I had nothing left to help me win, the regret and fear that I had subdued instantly spread within me.

I should have run away. Should I beg for mercy? Someone save me.

——I can't think of anything better.

I'm pretty sure I'm currently sweating like crazy with a pathetically pale face. Probably due to pity, Sariel's spear had not yet pierced through me.

“.....wait a second.”

As my mind was in chaos, I remembered one thing. A magic that could pierce through her aura and was also faster than her spear.

I didn't hesitate even a second to use it. My right fist had already become tight.

“Pile—“

I raised my fist overhead and stepped in.

The activation process is simple. Simply gather magic in my fist and release it.

Already, magical energy of density much stronger than the time I had first used it, gathered in my arm and swirled around.

The image is a drill, rotating at high-speed, I concentrate all the destructive power on the pointed end.

Eat this! My final useless struggle.

“BUNKEEEEEEERRRR!!!”

The swirling black fist was intercepted by white magical energy.

The first thing I felt was the sensation of that magical energy, next my brain recognised what I was seeing. It was the sight of Sariel blocking my pile bunker with her bloody right hand alone.

From the hand that had blocked me, white magical energy was rotating in the reverse direction of my own.

Both the magical energies were nullifying each other out at the point where they touched. And soon, my destructive black magical energy disappeared without any trace.

“.....so, it really was useless.”

As I finally felt a sense of complete defeat, a strong shock attacked my head.

The last thing I saw was the usual expressionless figure swinging the spear horizontally.

Sorry Lily, it seems I won't be able to protect your village———

While thinking that, my consciousness was broken off.

CHAPTER 56

FAIRY VS. APOSTLE

The fainted Kurono had collapsed on the ground.

“.....”

As Sariel looked over him, she started to rack her brains a bit.

Her first worry was what she should do with Kurono. The second was that she had once again ruined her regenerated right hand.

The latter could be solved as it would heal with the passage of time, but she couldn't come up with what she should do with Kurono instantly.

In the first place, no matter how much Kurono tried to kill her, Sariel was not going to kill him. Sariel was fine if he would just live happily somewhere far away.

There might be experimental bodies that might curse Kurono because he was the only one who had gotten free.

But Sariel found some sort of salvation in Kurono who had attained freedom that none other experimental body including herself could attain.

She wanted him to live the share of every experiment that had died as well.

That is why she let him run when she met him in the 3rd laboratory and was also going to let him go this time as well.

A ‘normal’ life away from fighting. He had definitely achieved half of it at least. But,

“You have got something to protect as well right?”

The fairy girl that Kurono let go of before attacking, he met her in this world and she became precious enough for him, to put his own life on the line to protect her.

Sariel met countless men on the battlefield that fought to protect something, and, she did not let even a single one of them return back alive.

Kurono's figure was completely overlapping with those brave heroes that came to fight only to face a tragic death.

"Still, I don't want you to die."

In a way, this was only to fulfil her own ego. She started thinking of a way to get him out of here.

"....."

As the commander of the Crusaders, she couldn't just let someone who attacked her to go freely intentionally.

Kurono's true identity was a modified [Foreigner], not a general or a noble of Daedalus, even lower importance than a normal civilian, so they won't follow him to the ends of the earth to kill him at least.

But, if the Crusaders caught him, then he'll be definitely executed for trying to assassinate the supreme commander.

So, she can't call the army here.

But she can't leave it as it is either.

If he woke up now, it'll be good if he just ran away, but there's a chance that he might start attacking again as well. In the first place, there's a high chance that the guards patrolling would find him first.

In every case, the result isn't very appealing.

Then, maybe she could make someone carry Kurono to a far away town.

But, Sariel didn't have anyone to whom she could entrust such a personal task. And even if she is the supreme commander, she can't give such a weird order either.

".....What should I do?"

After becoming an Apostle, she had done nothing but destroy the enemies so this was the first time she was thinking a bit in a human-like way.

Fortunately, she already informed the subordinates that she was going out for a bit so at least she had time to think.

Originally, she had come here because she had sensed the barrier breaking. The barrier was not the type to inform of intruders so nobody else had come here other than Sariel.

Sariel was standing there looking at Kurono and had not even remembered to erase her spear.

As she was thinking inside her head, she suddenly looked towards the forest.

(“Something is.....coming”)

At first, she only sensed it as an indescribable atmosphere but it soon turned into a clear ‘abnormality’.

Inside the dark forest, a green light could be seen.

That light was approaching this place and was getting stronger and bigger.

And, at the same time she saw the light, she realized that the trees in the forest were losing their colour.

As the light came closer and closer, the trees in visibility that had thick trunks instantly started to wither and the fresh leaves started to dry up and fall away.

“This is.....Life Drain.”

Sariel confirmed, the light in the forest was stealing the life force of the trees in the forest and collecting it. Life force is an energy included in magical energy required to sustain life.

Magicians would never use life force unless they were using suicide magic – Apoptosis. And a magic that could steal the life force of others was a taboo among taboos, an extremely dangerous thing.

Sariel felt that it was fortunate that normal soldiers were not here.

If a drain of this level was activated, people with no training in using magic, and those that have low resistance would all have been in fatal danger right now.

Facing the green light, Sariel realized that even though she could not see it, life force was being drained like a storm right now.

All the trees in the forest had become dried, and it had become a forest of death where not a shred of life force could be sensed.

And, the reason of this abnormality, the emerald light finally came in front of Sariel.

“Get away from Kurono.”

It was a girl with a presence somewhat similar to Sariel.

Literally shining platinum blonde long hair and white skin.

Eyes that were same colour as the emerald green sphere of light surrounding her.

Wearing a frilly black one piece dress, on her back were 2 pair of rainbow coloured wings.

It truly matched the image of the fairy princess that had appeared once in a book Sariel had read a long time ago.

“Who are you?”(sariel)

But that girl with the unparalleled beauty, twisted her beautiful expression in rage, and released bloodlust that could be seen with naked eyes.

“I said—“

In response to Sariel’s question, the girl,

“—Get away from him!!”

Attacked with an immense beam of magical energy.

(“A chantless [Flashing white arrows – Fortius Sagita]—no, a type of [Extra magic] or [Original Magic]”)

As Sariel thought that, she took evasive manoeuvres but as the name suggested, the speed of those beam was at light speed.

Unable to completely dodge, the beam burned away the hem of Sariel's priest vestment.

Dodonn!!

The beam that passed Sariel, struck the barrier and without almost any resistance, pierced through it and hit the castle walls.

The wall that got destroyed with a loud boom raised a cloud of dust reached even till where Kurono was lying.

“Kurono!!”

Sariel heard the voice of the girl beyond the cloud of dust.

As soon as the cloud of dust disappeared, Sariel saw the girl lifting Kurono in her arms.

“Kurono—“

The expression on the girl right now as she called Kurono's name while crying was so ephemeral and sweet that it made the expression she showed to Sariel feel like a lie.

The girl hugged Kurono's body as she brought him to a sitting like state.

Sariel couldn't hear what the girl was whispering but she should have realized that Kurono was only unconscious.

The girl, then, easily picked up Kurono in her arms even though she was half his size.

“Are you the girl that Kurono let go of earlier?”(Sariel)

“Don't call his name so lightly!”

Once again a killing gaze pierced through Sariel.

Even the emotionless and detached Sariel understood that the girl was angry, and she understood the reason behind the anger as well.

Just how Kurono had protected her, she was also protecting him. And if someone so precious to her got hurt, she would either get sad or angry obviously.

“If you’re going to take him with you, then I won’t chase you.”(Sariel)

“I see.”

Just saying that, she turned away from Sariel while embracing Kurono.

“Now then, please go die.”

The wings on the girl’s back flickered.

As Sariel sensed the fluctuations in magical energy, the next moment, 10-odd balls of light shot out from her rainbow wings.

It’s not a beam so they were not at light speed, but they were still many times faster than Kurono’s bullets. Sariel, realizing the high speed, moved her body to dodge them, at that moment, she saw the trajectory of the balls of light get slightly changed.

(“Automatic-tracking ability.”)

Even when she kicked the ground to fly in the air, the balls of light clearly captured her motion and bent instantly at a right angle and corrected their trajectory.

(“Very high level, no choice but to shoot them down.”)

Sariel who landed on ground gripped the spear handle with her blood stained right hand.

It was already at a much lower condition than normal and furthermore, it was even damaged fatally by Kurono’s poison.

Although she didn’t want to use this since she wanted to avoid putting stress on her right wrist, but the only way to intercept those light balls was to use both her hands.

“Fast—”

Releasing a small voice, she stuck out her white spear with speed even higher than the approaching light balls that were in front of her.

The instant the spear pierced through the balls of light.

The compressed light magical energy released pure destructive energy.

A blinding flash and a shockwave strong enough to rip off limbs attacked Sariel, but without swaying even a single bit, she kept on destroying the balls of light.

“nn...”

When she pierced through the last ball, the spear in her hand was also smashed to pieces and disappeared.

As the storm of flashes and destruction finally settled down, the grass lawn that she was supposed to be standing on had been gouged out and bare earth could be seen.

The only place where grass remained was where the sole of her feet were standing on.

“.....ran away.”

As she looked, the figure of the girl was nowhere to be seen.

She was seriously trying to kill Sariel, but she must have prioritized Kurono's safety and left this place.

The moment she thought that, a chill ran down her spine similar to when she had faced the Dragon King.

“!?!?”

Above her, a magic circle drawn with white lines of diameter 10m, suddenly appeared.

Letters of the Ancients or age of gods were drawn along with an unknown figure in the centre of the circle, but Sariel currently did not have the leisure to calmly analyze it.

“—Light wing God shield – Aralux Aegis”

Sariel used her strongest defensive spell and wings of light spread out and covered her whole body.

At the same time, a mass of light with the same diameter as the magic circle came down from above.

A seven-coloured torrent of light, having the same strength as that of a Dragon's Breath, swallowed Sariel.

CHAPTER 57

THE LAST RETURN

It's been 3 months since I have become an adventurer, the quests I have taken were Rank 1, therefore weren't dangerous. Even so, I studied my Black Magic every day and night.

To me, black magic is my most reliable power to live in this world. Furthermore, the research and development for the study of magic became a hobby for me.

The imagination is crucial to activate magic.

There are various categories within magic like the magic I use can only be used by the person himself 'Original' , the magic used by Lily which can be used by people from same race 'Extra' and the magic used by Aten and other many magicians known as 'Model'. They all can't be activated unless a clear imagination is made in mind.

A countryside person and on top of it a rookie adventurer like me, the only thing I can do towards the research on my magic is to just deepen my imagination and understanding of magic.

By the way, the Model magic can be used by anyone with magic power present in them. It is originated from theories close to that of science and maths after all.

I gave up on learning the 'model magic', because to learn the model magic with the power equivalent to that of my "anti matter" , it takes at least 2 years of training to learn it.

In the first place, this world's the chanting for it and its original pronunciation

"لا صلب الا جل يد درع الا باردة تجم يدم منع هيروشى ك يكوا"

is completely non-understandable to me

Most probably, I came to understand this world's language thanks to remodelling, but from the rules of automatic translation that occurs inside my brain the chants have been left out.

On the contrary, the normal conversations and characters are 24×7 all year long being automatically translated, so it's impossible to learn the language.

If, I had talent in primary color magic, I can use it without even chanting, but seems like there was no talent inside me except for black magic. [ET: SO lame~ pfft.]

Therefore, I stopped learning about the Model magic and decided to use my Original magic as my only weapon.

ANd so I invented the “Magic Bullet “Bullet Art”” and “Magic Sword”Sword Art””. [ET: SAO anyone... and MAO anyone>>>??<<<]

There is no effect like dramatical increase in power or any new effects were made but by using it in battles, I can feel “It’s gotten easier to use it” effect like the improvement in “Activation sequence” “Accuracy Management” and “Magical energy Requirement ”

The ‘magic bullet’ is just a general term for the attack magic I’ve made taking ‘buckshot’ and ‘anti matter’ as center. the “magic sword” is the improved version for “automatic fencing” which can, at will, use blackened swords without using my hands.

In addition if I use the “magic bullet” with “black ballista” and the ‘magic sword’ with cursed weapons, then the offensive power will rise exponentially.

Other than that, I’ve made defensive magic before like ‘Shield’ and ‘Baphomet’s Embrace’ which by wearing it, my defence has gradually gotten better.

Compared to the first fight with Sariel, this time I had a lot of useful equipments and my offensive power had risen too,

But, even with all that I was still no match for her.

Holding onto a rope of hope, I on my own will entered the fight, but still Sariel went easy on me so as to not kill me.

The model magic’s offensive magic and defensive magic is commonly used as “Ignis Sagita” and “Ice Shield”.

But, Sariel activated the “Sagita” and “Shield” separately which meant that it’s power was reduced to half.

Sariel must have analysed that her half power of her normal would be enough to take the fully equipped me head on.

There's no way I can win against her. No matter with how much I attack her with the will to do or die, she can just play with me like a child.

Weak, Yeah, I was weak.

It's still fine for me to fight to protect myself but when Sariel and Crusaders came to Pandora continent, the power to protect the Irz Village along with Lily was just too insufficient in me.

To protect other people too, more power is needed. If you say it's obvious, then yes it is.

But, I understood that obvious thing just now.

I want to become stronger, I want more power, when I think that, i regret for not crave for power from start. Now that i think about it, it's my first time ever to think like this.

“–Kurono!”

With my name called, I woke up from my dream to see the face of Lily.

“Lily.....Good Morning”

“Good Morning, it's night although.”

When I look around, it's inside some forest. In the sky, a moon much bigger than earth's version is brilliantly shining,

I also realise that I'm sleeping on Lily's lap.

Moreover, Lily was in her little girl form so it will look like her embracing my head only.

“Am I alive?”

I rise up and murmur.

I recall everything till the moment I fell unconscious

“I carried you and escaped to here.”

“I see, Thank you”

“I’ve also retrieved all the weapons too”

When I closely look, the cursed hatched ‘Tsujigiri’(lit. Serial Killer) is leaning against a tree.

To think that she even had the time to retrieve weapons with her opponent being Sariel. But now it’s not the time to think about it.

“I thought to protect you, but ended up being protected by you, I’m so uncool.”

“I’m happy that you tried to protect me, but from now on don’t fight alone with opponents you can’t win against. Whenever there is danger for your life, I will be by your side. After all, I’m your partner, aren’t I?”

“That’s right, Sorry, now I won’t do something so reckless–”

That’s right, Lily is not someone I have to protect one sidedly but she is my partner whom I can leave my back to.

On my own will I go away from her to protect her, and in the end I get protected, there is no other thing more pitiable than this.

And I have unlimited words to thank to Lily.

“–by the way, Lily’s way of speaking is different, right?”

I once again look seriously at Lily, she looks like a small girl, but the words flowing out of her mouth are really fluent.

As if, I’m talking with the young girl form of Lily.

“Un, right now my consciousness returned to the same way it is at the time of full moon nights”

“Only consciousness?”

“That’s right, because I have something to tell to you as soon as you wake up. I can’t explain information too with the mentality of a child, right?”

“Is, is that how it is.....”

Having said that, I feel an extraordinary uneasy feeling from Lily.

I almost carelessly thought of asking her whether her usual behaviour was just an act?

“Muu, I doesn’t feel like you are accepting it?”

“Don’t mind it, and tell me what you want to tell me.”

“Kay, I don’t have much time so I’ll start first.”

“First, It’s already been 1 day since you fainted.”

It’s not like I used all my magic power, and still was out cold for 1 whole day, looks like I was really hit with great force on my head

“And here is between the woods at the foot of Riol ridge. I don’t know whether they are chasing us or not, but on the outskirts of Riol village there are many humans in white uniforms roaming around. It’s better if you don’t try to go to highway or the village.”

“I see, looks like it’ll be a detour for the way back to home.”

Even though Sariel was letting us leave, but even she can’t help it if soldier find out about the fact that a fight broke out there.

“Still, how did you carry me till here”

“When I saved Kurono from in front of her, I was in my original form.”

“her you say , are you talking about Sariel?”

“Un. that idiot woman”

Lily you're face is scary, don't make such angry face in the little form.

"Looks like it's true she killed the Dragon King. Anyway, there is no doubt she is ridiculously strong, so kurono must not fight people like her from now on, I also don't want to get involved with likes of her."

"Aa, I got it, and looks like there will be no 'next' too."

I doubt there will be another chance to fight with Sariel anymore.

After all my Assassination plan was ruined, I now need to think about what to do from now on.

"Well, let's return to Irz village fast."

After telling the news about the death of Dragon King and the possession of Daedalus, I need to prepare for running to another country.

Around this area there is no more hope, but if it's Irz village near the western end, they still have time to run.

"nee, Kurono"

"Nh?"

"The magic I used to return to my original form, I had saved it as an emergency measure. The one that can use it is only the child form of mine and it's complete coincidence that it succeeded and it also takes time. It's mostly due to luck that I'm able to talk to you, that's why don't do something like this ever again."

"Yeah, I got it, Sorr–"

Lily jumps into my chest.

"I was really worried."

"–Sorry, Lily"

For a little while, i embraced Lily while patting her head.

Putting Lily in my hood, I run up the highway in full speed.

The capital city is overflowing with soldiers, so I had to take a detour through the forest which took me a lot of days to complete.

Using that I came near the center of Daedalus territory and soldiers were also not visible so I went ahead to use the south-west highway.

I keep on running except for time to eat. Not stopping for any village that passes by and even cutting the sleeping time.

Still it's impossible for Lily to cut her sleeping hours, and was sleeping on my back just a while ago.

Even so, I want to give her a comfortable sleep at bed, but I need to go to Irz village as soon as I can , and this thing even Lily understands.

And at last, we came to Kuar Village.

Naturally, I had thought of passing through here without stopping, but there a lot of commotion coming from there.

“Did something happen over there?”

“?”

Along with Lily who also didn't know about what was happening, i decided to move towards the centre of uproar.

The plaza was full of people.

If it was just that, I would've agreed that they are getting prepared for the summer festival but, the people in plaza were holding up luggage and were having tired expressions.

They are getting water from the vigilantes of Kuar village and getting first-aid for their injuries.

“Excuse, did something happen here?”

I asked one kuar villager in the plaza

“I don’t know what happened, but they have escaped from Irz village.”

“Eh?”

“They have been coming here one by one and by the morning it was a really big deal. The vigilante corps are also patrolling here and there, just doesn’t feel right around here.”

Now that I think about it, the faces of people in the plaza are known to me.

The moment I confirmed it, I rushed up to the plaza and shouted.

“I’m Kurono, an adventurer from Irz Village, what happened in the village tell me please!”

“Kurono.....Yeah, i have seen you”(random villager)

“Oo, Lily-san is also here.”

After giving responses like that, some werecats stand in front of me.

“Irz village was attacked by human’s army.”

The moment I heard those words, though I didn’t want to believe it, I understood the situation.

“We also don’t know about the details, but last night a human army attacked us and the escape order was given out, so we in a hurried and ran up to Kuar village. Near the north-west highway many flames were present and explosions were also heard, most probably the vigilante corps have been fighting there.”

“Last night.....”

“The only ones here are the ones who lived near the south-west gate, most of the villagers are still not here. Hey! you are an adventurer right, can you go and save villagers, no you can just go to see what is happening there, it will take more time for Kuar village’s vigilante corps to move—”

The surrounding people too look at us with eyes full of expectations.

"Yeah, leave it to us, we will definitely save the villagers!"

Please, please everyone be safe! [ET: 2 times please is not a typo.]

With expectations, I run with my all power towards the north – west highway to reach to Irz Village.

